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WORKS

OF

CHARLES DICKENS.

HOUSEHOLD EDITION.

ILLUSTRATED FROM DRAWINGS BY F. O. C. DARLEY AND JOHN GILBERT.

THE PICKWICK PAPERS.

VOL. III.

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THE POSTHUMOUS PAPERS

OF

THE PICKWICK CLUB.

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POSTHUMOUS PAPERS

OF

THE PICKWICK CLUB.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE STORY OF THE GOBLINS WHO STOLE A SEXTON

"In an old abbey town, down in this part of the country, a long, long while ago — so long, that the story must be a true one, because our great grandfathers implicitly believed it — there officiated as sexton and grave-digger in the church-yard, one Gabriel Grub. It by no means follows that because a man is a sexton, and constantly surrounded by emblems of mortality, therefore he should be a morose and melancholy man; your undertakers are the merriest fellows in the world; and I once had the honor of being on intimate terms with a mute, who in private life, and off duty, was as comical and jocose a little fellow as ever chirped out a devil-may-care song, without a hitch in his memory, or drained off the contents of a good stiff glass without stopping for breath. But, notwithstanding these precedents to the contrary, Gabriel Grub was an ill-conditioned, cross-grained, surly fellow — a morose and lonely man, who consorted with nobody but himself, and an old wicker bottle which fitted into his large deep waistcoat pocket — and who eyed each merry face, as it

passed him by, with such a deep scowl of malice and ill-humor, as it was difficult to meet without feeling something the worse for.

"A little before twilight, one Christmas-eve, Gabriel shouldered his spade, lighted his lantern, and betook himself towards the old church-yard; for he had got a grave to finish by next morning, and feeling very low, he thought it might raise his spirits, perhaps, if he went on with his work at once. As he went his way, up the ancient street, he saw the cheerful light of the blazing fires gleam through the old casements, and heard the loud laugh and the cheerful shouts of those who were assembled around them; he marked the bustling preparations for next day's cheer, and smelt the numerous savory odors consequent thereupon, as they steamed up from the kitchen windows in clouds. All this was gall and wormwood to the heart of Gabriel Grub; and when groups of children bounded out of the houses, tripped across the road, and were met, before they could knock at the opposite door, by half a dozen curly-headed little rascals who crowded round them as they flocked upstairs to spend the evening in their Christmas games, Gabriel smiled grimly, and clutched the handle of his spade with a firmer grasp as he thought of measles, scarlet fever, thrush, hooping-cough, and a good many other sources of consolation besides.

"In this happy frame of mind, Gabriel strode along: returning a short, sullen growl to the good-humored greetings of such of his neighbors as now and then passed him: until he turned into the dark lane which led to the church-yard. Now, Gabriel had been looking forward to reaching the dark lane, because it was, generally speaking, a nice, gloomy, mournful place, into which

the towns-people did not much care to go, except in broad daylight, and when the sun was shining; consequently, he was not a little indignant to hear a young urchin roaring out some jolly song about a merry Christmas, in this very sanctuary, which had been called Coffin Lane ever since the days of the old abbey, and the time of the shaven-headed monks. As Gabriel walked on, and the voice drew nearer, he found it proceeded from a small boy, who was hurrying along, to join one of the little parties in the old street, and who, partly to keep himself company, and partly to prepare himself for the occasion, was shouting out the song at the highest pitch of his lungs. So Gabriel waited until the boy came up, and then dodged him into a corner, and rapped him over the head with his lantern, five or six times, to teach him to modulate his voice. And as the boy hurried away with his hand to his head, singing quite a different sort of tune, Gabriel Grub chuckled very heartily to himself, and entered the church-yard: locking the gate behind him.

"He took off his coat, put down his lantern, and getting into the unfinished grave, worked at it for an hour or so with right good will. But the earth was hardened with the frost, and it was no very easy matter to break it up, and shovel it out; and although there was a moon, it was a very young one, and shed little light upon the grave, which was in the shadow of the church. At any other time, these obstacles would have made Gabriel Grub very moody and miserable, but he was so well pleased with having stopped the small boy's singing, that he took little heed of the scanty progress he had made, and looked down into the grave, when he had finished work for the night, with grim satisfaction: murmuring as he gathered up his things:

Brave lodgings for one, brave lodgings for one,
A few feet of cold earth, when life is done;
A stone at the head, a stone at the feet,
A rich, juicy meal for the worms to eat;
Rank grass over head, and damp clay around,
Brave lodgings for one, these, in holy ground!

"'Ho! ho!' laughed Gabriel Grub, as he sat himself down on a flat tombstone, which was a favorite resting-place of his; and drew forth his wicker bottle. 'A coffin at Christmas! A Christmas-box. Ho! ho! ho!'

"'Ho! ho! ho!' repeated a voice which sounded close behind him.

"Gabriel paused in some alarm, in the act of raising the wicker bottle to his lips: and looked round. The bottom of the oldest grave about him was not more still and quiet than the church-yard in the pale moonlight. The cold hoarfrost glistened on the tombstones, and sparkled like rows of gems among the stone carvings of the old church. The snow lay hard and crisp upon the ground: and spread over the thickly strewn mounds of earth, so white and smooth a cover, that it seemed as if corpses lay there, hidden only by their winding sheets. Not the faintest rustle broke the profound tranquillity of the solemn scene. Sound itself appeared to be frozen up, all was so cold and still.

"'It was the echoes,' said Gabriel Grub, raising the bottle to his lips again.

"'It was *not*,' said a deep voice.

"Gabriel started up, and stood rooted to the spot with astonishment and terror; for his eyes rested on a form that made his blood run cold.

"Seated on an upright tombstone, close to him, was a strange unearthly figure, whom Gabriel felt at once, was

no being of this world. His long fantastic legs which might have reached the ground, were cocked up, and crossed after a quaint, fantastic fashion; his sinewy arms were bare; and his hands rested on his knees. On his short, round body, he wore a close covering, ornamented with small slashes; a short cloak dangled at his back; the collar was cut into curious peaks which served the goblin in lieu of ruff or neckerchief; and his shoes curled up at the toes into long points. On his head he wore a broad-brimmed sugar-loaf hat, garnished with a single feather. The hat was covered with the white frost; and the goblin looked as if he had sat on the same tombstone very comfortably, for two or three hundred years. He was sitting perfectly still; his tongue was put out, as if in derision; and he was grinning at Gabriel Grub with such a grin as only a goblin could call up.

"'It was *not* the echoes,' said the goblin.

"Gabriel Grub was paralyzed, and could make no reply.

"'What do you do here on Christmas-eve?' said the goblin, sternly.

"'I came to dig a grave, sir,' stammered Gabriel Grub.

"'What man wanders among graves and churchyards on such a night as this?' cried the goblin.

"'Gabriel Grub! Gabriel Grub!' screamed a wild chorus of voices that seemed to fill the churchyard. Gabriel looked fearfully round — nothing was to be seen.

"'What have you got in that bottle?' said the goblin.

"'Hollands, sir,' replied the sexton, trembling more than ever; for he had bought it of the smugglers, and

he thought that perhaps his questioner might be in the excise department of the goblins.

"'Who drinks Hollands alone, and in a church-yard, on such a night as this?' said the goblin.

"'Gabriel Grub! Gabriel Grub!' exclaimed the wild voices again.

"The goblin leered maliciously at the terrified sexton, and then raising his voice, exclaimed:

"'And who, then, is our fair and lawful prize?'

"To this inquiry the invisible chorus replied, in a strain that sounded like the voices of many choristers singing to the mighty swell of the old church organ — a strain that seemed borne to the sexton's ears upon a wild wind, and to die away as it passed onward — but the burden of the reply was still the same, 'Gabriel Grub! Gabriel Grub!'

"The goblin grinned a broader grin than before, as he said, 'Well, Gabriel, what do you say to this?'

"The sexton gasped for breath.

"'What do you think of this, Gabriel?' said the goblin, kicking up his feet in the air on either side of the tombstone, and looking at the turned-up points with as much complacency as if he had been contemplating the most fashionable pair of Wellingtons in all Bond Street.

"'It's — it's — very curious, sir,' replied the sexton, half dead with fright; 'very curious, and very pretty, but I think I'll go back and finish my work, sir, if you please.'

"'Work!' said the goblin, 'what work?'

"'The grave, sir; making the grave,' stammered the sexton.

"'Oh, the grave, eh?' said the goblin; 'who makes graves at a time when all other men are merry, and takes a pleasure in it?'

"Again the mysterious voices replied, 'Gabriel Grub! Gabriel Grub!'

"'I'm afraid my friends want you, Gabriel,' said the goblin, thrusting his tongue farther into his cheek than ever — and a most astonishing tongue it was — 'I'm afraid my friends want you, Gabriel,' said the goblin.

"'Under favor, sir,' replied the horror-stricken sexton, 'I don't think they can, sir; they don't know me, sir; I don't think the gentlemen have ever seen me, sir.'

"'Oh yes they have,' replied the goblin; 'we know the man with the sulky face and the grim scowl, that came down the street to-night, throwing his evil looks at the children, and grasping his burying spade the tighter. We know the man who struck the boy in the envious malice of his heart, because the boy could be merry, and he could not. We know him, we know him.'

"Here, the goblin gave a loud shrill laugh, which the echoes returned twenty-fold: and throwing his legs up in the air, stood upon his head, or rather upon the very point of his sugar-loaf hat, on the narrow edge of the tombstone: whence he threw a summerset with extraordinary agility, right to the sexton's feet, at which he planted himself in the attitude in which tailors generally sit upon the shop-board.

"'I — I — am afraid I must leave you, sir,' said the sexton, making an effort to move.

"'Leave us!' said the goblin, 'Gabriel Grub going to leave us. Ho! ho! ho!'

"As the goblin laughed, the sexton observed, for one instant, a brilliant illumination within the windows of the church, as if the whole building were lighted up; it disappeared, the organ pealed forth a lively air, and whole troops of goblins, the very counterpart of the first one,

poured into the church-yard, and began playing at leap-frog with the tombstones: never stopping for an instant to take breath, but 'overing' the highest among them, one after the other, with the most marvellous dexterity. The first goblin was a most astonishing leaper, and none of the others could come near him; even in the extremity of his terror the sexton could not help observing, that while his friends were content to leap over the common-sized gravestones, the first one took the family vaults, iron railings and all, with as much ease as if they had been so many street posts.

"At last the game reached to a most exciting pitch; the organ played quicker and quicker; and the goblins leaped faster and faster: coiling themselves up, rolling head over heels upon the ground, and bounding over the tombstones like foot-balls. The sexton's brain whirled round with the rapidity of the motion he beheld, and his legs reeled beneath him, as the spirits flew before his eyes: when the goblin king, suddenly darting towards him, laid his hand upon his collar, and sunk with him through the earth.

"When Gabriel Grub had had time to fetch his breath, which the rapidity of his descent had for the moment taken away, he found himself in what appeared to be a large cavern, surrounded on all sides by crowds of goblins, ugly and grim; in the centre of the room, on an elevated seat, was stationed his friend of the church-yard; and close beside him stood Gabriel Grub himself, without the power of motion.

"'Cold to-night,' said the king of the goblins, 'very cold. A glass of something warm, here!'

"At this command, half a dozen officious goblins, with a perpetual smile upon their faces, whom Gabriel Grub

imagined to be courtiers, on that account, hastily disappeared, and presently returned with a goblet of liquid fire, which they presented to the king.

"'Ah!' cried the goblin, whose cheeks and throat were transparent, as he tossed down the flame, 'This warms one, indeed! Bring a bumper of the same, for Mr. Grub.'

"It was in vain for the unfortunate sexton to protest that he was not in the habit of taking anything warm at night; one of the goblins held him while another poured the blazing liquid down his throat; the whole assembly screeched with laughter as he coughed and choked, and wiped away the tears which gushed plentifully from his eyes, after swallowing the burning draught.

"'And now' said the king, fantastically poking the taper corner of his sugar-loaf hat into the sexton's eye, and thereby occasioning him the most exquisite pain: 'And now show the man of misery and gloom, a few of the pictures from our great store-house!'

"As the goblin said this, a thick cloud which obscured the remoter end of the cavern, rolled gradually away, and disclosed, apparently at a great distance, a small and scantily furnished, but neat and clean apartment. A crowd of little children were gathered round a bright fire, clinging to their mother's gown, and gambolling around her chair. The mother occasionally rose, and drew aside the window-curtain, as if to look for some expected object; a frugal meal was ready spread upon the table; and an elbow-chair was placed near the fire. A knock was heard at the door: the mother opened it, and the children crowded round her, and clapped their hands for joy, as their father entered. He was wet and weary, and shook the snow from his garments, as the children

crowded round him, and seizing his cloak, hat, stick, and gloves, with busy zeal, ran with them from the room. Then, as he sat down to his meal before the fire, the children climbed about his knee, and the mother sat by his side, and all seemed happiness and comfort.

"But a change came upon the view, almost imperceptibly. The scene was altered to a small bedroom, where the fairest and youngest child lay dying; the roses had fled from his cheek, and the light from his eye; and even as the sexton looked upon him with an interest he had never felt or known before, he died. His young brothers and sisters crowded round his little bed, and seized his tiny hand, so cold and heavy; but they shrunk back from its touch, and looked with awe on his infant face; for calm and tranquil as it was, and sleeping in rest and peace as the beautiful child seemed to be, they saw that he was dead, and they knew that he was an Angel looking down upon, and blessing them, from a bright and happy heaven.

"Again the light cloud passed across the picture, and again the subject changed. The father and mother were old and helpless now, and the number of those about them was diminished more than half; but content and cheerfulness sat on every face, and beamed in every eye, as they crowded round the fireside, and told and listened to old stories of earlier and bygone days. Slowly and peacefully, the father sunk into the grave, and, soon after, the sharer of all his cares and troubles followed him to a place of rest. The few, who yet survived them, knelt by their tomb, and watered the green turf which covered it with their tears; then rose, and turned away: sadly and mournfully, but not with bitter cries, or despairing lamentations, for they knew that they should one day

meet again; and once more they mixed with the busy world, and their content and cheerfulness were restored. The cloud settled upon the picture, and concealed it from the sexton's view.

"'What do you think of *that?*' said the goblin, turning his large face towards Gabriel Grub.

"Gabriel murmured out something about its being very pretty, and looked somewhat ashamed, as the goblin bent his fiery eyes upon him.

"'*You* a miserable man!' said the goblin, in a tone of excessive contempt. 'You!' He appeared disposed to add more, but indignation choked his utterance, so he lifted up one of his very pliable legs, and flourishing it above his head a little, to insure his aim, administered a good sound kick to Gabriel Grub; immediately after which, all the goblins in waiting, crowded round the wretched sexton, and kicked him without mercy: according to the established and invariable custom of courtiers upon earth, who kick whom royalty kicks, and hug whom royalty hugs.

"'Show him some more!' said the king of the goblins.

"At these words, the cloud was again dispelled, and a rich and beautiful landscape was disclosed to view — there is just such another, to this day, within half a mile of the old abbey town. The sun shone from out the clear blue sky, the water sparkled beneath his rays, and the trees looked greener, and the flowers more gay, beneath his cheering influence. The water rippled on, with a pleasant sound; the trees rustled in the light wind that murmured among their leaves; the birds sung upon the boughs; and the lark carolled on high, her welcome to the morning. Yes, it was morning: the bright, balmy

morning of summer; the minutest leaf, the smallest blade of grass, was instinct with life. The ant crept forth to her daily toil, the butterfly fluttered and basked in the warm rays of the sun; myriads of insects spread their transparent wings, and revelled in their brief but happy existence. Man walked forth, elated with the scene; and all was brightness and splendor.

"'*You* a miserable man!' said the king of the goblins, in a more contemptuous tone than before. And again the king of the goblins gave his leg a flourish; again it descended on the shoulders of the sexton; and again the attendant goblins imitated the example of their chief.

"Many a time the cloud went and came, and many a lesson it taught to Gabriel Grub, who, although his shoulders smarted with pain from the frequent applications of the goblin's feet, looked on with an interest that nothing could diminish. He saw that men who worked hard, and earned their scanty bread with lives of labor, were cheerful and happy; and that to the most ignorant, the sweet face of nature was a never-failing source of cheerfulness and joy. He saw those who had been delicately nurtured, and tenderly brought up, cheerful under privations, and superior to suffering, that would have crushed many of a rougher grain, because they bore within their own bosoms the materials of happiness, contentment, and peace. He saw that women, the tenderest and most fragile of all God's creatures, were the oftenest superior to sorrow, adversity, and distress; and he saw that it was because they bore, in their own hearts, an inexhaustible well-spring of affection and devotion. Above all, he saw that men like himself, who snarled at the mirth and cheerfulness of others, were the foulest weeds

on the fair surface of the earth; and setting all the good of the world against the evil, he came to the conclusion that it was a very decent and respectable sort of world after all. No sooner had he formed it, than the cloud which had closed over the last picture, seemed to settle on his senses, and lull him to repose. One by one, the goblins faded from his sight; and as the last one disappeared, he sunk to sleep.

"The day had broken when Gabriel Grub awoke, and found himself lying, at full length on the flat gravestone in the church-yard, with the wicker bottle lying empty by his side, and his coat, spade, and lantern, all well whitened by the last night's frost, scattered on the ground. The stone on which he had first seen the goblin seated, stood bolt upright before him, and the grave at which he had worked, the night before, was not far off. At first, he began to doubt the reality of his adventures, but the acute pain in his shoulders when he attempted to rise, assured him that the kicking of the goblins was certainly not ideal. He was staggered again, by observing no traces of footsteps in the snow on which the goblins had played at leap-frog with the gravestones, but he speedily accounted for this circumstance when he remembered that, being spirits, they would leave no visible impression behind them. So, Gabriel Grub got on his feet as well as he could, for the pain in his back; and brushing the frost off his coat, put it on, and turned his face towards the town.

"But he was an altered man, and he could not bear the thought of returning to a place where his repentance would be scoffed at, and his reformation disbelieved. He hesitated for a few moments; and then turned away to wander where he might, and seek his bread elsewhere.

"The lantern, the spade, and the wicker-bottle were found, that day, in the church-yard. There were a great many speculations about the sexton's fate, at first, but it was speedily determined that he had been carried away by the goblins; and there were not wanting some very credible witnesses who had distinctly seen him whisked through the air on the back of a chestnut horse blind of one eye, with the hind-quarters of a lion, and the tail of a bear. At length all this was devoutly believed; and the new sexton used to exhibit to the curious, for a trifling emolument, a good-sized piece of the church weathercock which had been accidentally kicked off by the aforesaid horse in his aërial flight, and picked up by himself in the church-yard, a year or two afterwards.

"Unfortunately, these stories were somewhat disturbed by the unlooked-for reappearance of Gabriel Grub himself, some ten years afterwards, a ragged, contented, rheumatic old man. He told his story to the clergyman, and also to the mayor; and in course of time it began to be received, as a matter of history, in which form it has continued down to this very day. The believers in the weathercock tale, having misplaced their confidence once, were not easily prevailed upon to part with it again, so they looked as wise as they could, shrugged their shoulders, touched their foreheads, and murmured something about Gabriel Grub having drank all the Hollands, and then fallen asleep on the flat tombstone; and they affected to explain what he supposed he had witnessed in the goblin's cavern, by saying that he had seen the world, and grown wiser. But this opinion, which was by no means a popular one at any time, gradually died off; and be the matter how it may, as Gabriel Grub was afflicted with rheumatism to the end of his days, this story has at

least one moral, if it teach no better one — and that is, that if a man turn sulky and drink by himself at Christmas time, he may make up his mind to be not a bit the better for it; let the spirits be never so good, or let them be even as many degrees beyond proof, as those which Gabriel Grub saw in the goblin's cavern."

CHAPTER XXX.

HOW THE PICKWICKIANS MADE AND CULTIVATED THE ACQUAINTANCE OF A COUPLE OF NICE YOUNG MEN BELONGING TO ONE OF THE LIBERAL PROFESSIONS; HOW THEY DISPORTED THEMSELVES ON THE ICE; AND HOW THEIR FIRST VISIT CAME TO A CONCLUSION.

"WELL Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, as that favored servitor entered his bedchamber with his warm water, on the morning of Christmas-day, "Still frosty?"

"Water in the wash-hand basin's a mask o' ice, sir," responded Sam.

"Severe weather, Sam," observed Mr. Pickwick.

"Fine time for them as is well wropped up, as the Polar Bear said to himself, ven he was practising his skating," replied Mr. Weller.

"I shall be down in a quarter of an hour, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, untying his nightcap.

"Wery good, sir," replied Sam. "There's a couple o' Sawbones down stairs."

"A couple of what?" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, sitting up in bed.

"A couple o' Sawbones," said Sam.

"What's a Sawbones?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, not quite certain whether it was a live animal, or something to eat.

"What! don't you know what a Sawbones is, sir?" inquired Mr. Weller; "I thought everybody know'd as a Sawbones was a Surgeon."

"Oh, a Surgeon, eh?" said Mr. Pickwick with a smile.

"Just that, sir," replied Sam. "These here ones as is below, though, a'n't reg'lar thorough-bred Sawbones; they're only in trainin'."

"In other words, they're Medical Students, I suppose?" said Mr. Pickwick.

Sam Weller nodded assent.

"I am glad of it," said Mr. Pickwick, casting his night-cap energetically on the counterpane. "They are fine fellows; very fine fellows; with judgments matured by observation and reflection; and tastes refined by reading and study. I am very glad of it."

"They're a-smokin' cigars by the kitchen fire," said Sam.

"Ah!" observed Mr. Pickwick, rubbing his hands, "overflowing with kindly feelings and animal spirits. Just what I like to see!"

"And one on 'em," said Sam, not noticing his master's interruption, "one on 'em's got his legs on the table, and is a drinkin' brandy neat, vile the tother one — him in the barnacles — has got a barrel o' oysters atween his knees, wich he's a-openin' like steam, and as fast as he eats 'em, he takes a aim vith the shells at young dropsy, who's a-sittin' down fast asleep in the chimbley corner."

"Eccentricities of genius, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick. "You may retire."

Sam did retire accordingly; Mr. Pickwick, at the expiration of the quarter of an hour, went down to breakfast.

"Here he is at last!" said old Wardle. "Pickwick, this is Miss Allen's brother, Mr. Benjamin Allen — Ben we call him, and so may you if you like. This gentleman is his very particular friend, Mr." —

"Mr. Bob Sawyer," interposed Mr. Benjamin Allen; whereupon Mr. Bob Sawyer and Mr. Benjamin Allen laughed in concert.

Mr. Pickwick bowed to Bob Sawyer, and Bob Sawyer bowed to Mr. Pickwick; Bob and his very particular friend then applied themselves most assiduously to the eatables before them; and Mr. Pickwick had an opportunity of glancing at them both.

Mr. Benjamin Allen was a coarse, stout, thick-set young man, with black hair cut rather short, and a white face cut rather long. He was embellished with spectacles, and wore a white neckerchief. Below his single-breasted black surtout, which was buttoned up to his chin, appeared the usual number of pepper-and-salt colored legs, terminating in a pair of imperfectly polished boots. Although his coat was short in the sleeves, it disclosed no vestige of a linen wristband; and although there was quite enough of his face to admit of the encroachment of a shirt collar, it was not graced by the smallest approach to that appendage. He presented, altogether, rather a mildewy appearance: and emitted a fragrant odor of full-flavored Cubas.

Mr. Bob Sawyer, who was habited in a coarse blue coat, which, without being either a great-coat or a surtout, partook of the nature and qualities of both, had about him that sort of slovenly smartness, and swaggering gait, which is peculiar to young gentlemen who smoke in the streets by day, shout and scream in the same by night, call waiters by their Christian names, and do vari-

ous other acts and deeds of an equally facetious description. He wore a pair of plaid trousers, and a large rough double-breasted waistcoat; and out of doors, carried a thick stick with a big top. He eschewed gloves: and looked, upon the whole, something like a dissipated Robinson Crusoe.

Such were the two worthies to whom Mr. Pickwick was introduced, as he took his seat at the breakfast-table on Christmas morning.

"Splendid morning, gentlemen," said Mr. Pickwick.

Mr. Bob Sawyer slightly nodded his assent to the proposition, and asked Mr. Benjamin Allen for the mustard.

"Have you come far this morning, gentlemen?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Blue Lion at Muggleton," briefly responded Mr. Allen.

"You should have joined us last night," said Mr. Pickwick.

"So we should," replied Bob Sawyer, "but the brandy was too good to leave in a hurry: wasn't it, Ben?"

"Certainly," said Mr. Benjamin Allen; "and the cigars were not bad, or the pork-chops either: were they, Bob?"

"Decidedly not," said Bob. The particular friends resumed their attack upon the breakfast, more freely than before, as if the recollection of last night's supper had imparted a new relish to the meal.

"Peg away, Bob," said Mr. Allen to his companion, encouragingly.

"So I do," replied Bob Sawyer. And so, to do him justice, he did.

"Nothing like dissecting, to give one an appetite," said Mr. Bob Sawyer, looking round the table.

Mr. Pickwick slightly shuddered.

"By the by, Bob," said Mr. Allen, "have you finished that leg yet?"

"Nearly," replied Sawyer, helping himself to half a fowl as he spoke. "It's a very muscular one for a child's."

"Is it?" inquired Mr. Allen, carelessly.

"Very," said Bob Sawyer, with his mouth full.

"I've put my name down for an arm, at our place," said Mr. Allen. "We're clubbing for a subject, and the list is nearly full, only we can't get hold of any fellow that wants a head. I wish you'd take it."

"No," replied Bob Sawyer; "can't afford expensive luxuries."

"Nonsense!" said Allen.

"Can't indeed," rejoined Bob Sawyer. "I wouldn't mind a brain, but I couldn't stand a whole head."

"Hush, hush, gentlemen, pray," said Mr. Pickwick, "I hear the ladies."

As Mr. Pickwick spoke, the ladies, gallantly escorted by Messrs. Snodgrass, Winkle, and Tupman, returned from an early walk.

"Why, Ben!" said Arabella, in a tone which expressed more surprise than pleasure at the sight of her brother.

"Come to take you home to-morrow," replied Benjamin.

Mr. Winkle turned pale.

"Don't you see Bob Sawyer, Arabella?" inquired Mr. Benjamin Allen, somewhat reproachfully. Arabella gracefully held out her hand, in acknowledgment of Bob

Sawyer's presence. A thrill of hatred struck to Mr. Winkle's heart, as Bob Sawyer inflicted on the proffered hand a perceptible squeeze.

"Ben dear!" said Arabella, blushing; "have—have —you been introduced to Mr. Winkle?"

"I have not been, but I shall be very happy to be, Arabella," replied her brother gravely. Here Mr. Allen bowed grimly to Mr. Winkle, while Mr. Winkle and Mr. Bob Sawyer glanced mutual distrust out of the corners of their eyes.

The arrival of the two new visitors, and the consequent check upon Mr. Winkle and the young lady with the fur round her boots, would in all probability have proved a very unpleasant interruption to the hilarity of the party, had not the cheerfulness of Mr. Pickwick, and the good humor of the host, been exerted to the very utmost for the common weal. Mr. Winkle gradually insinuated himself into the good graces of Mr. Benjamin Allen, and even joined in a friendly conversation with Mr. Bob Sawyer; who, enlivened with the brandy, and the breakfast, and the talking, gradually ripened into a state of extreme facetiousness, and related with much glee an agreeable anecdote, about the removal of a tumor on some gentleman's head: which he illustrated by means of an oyster-knife and a half-quartern loaf, to the great edification of the assembled company. Then, the whole train went to church, where Mr. Benjamin Allen fell fast asleep: while Mr. Bob Sawyer abstracted his thoughts from worldly matters, by the ingenious process of carving his name on the seat of the pew, in corpulent letters of four inches long.

"Now," said Wardle, after a substantial lunch, with the agreeable items of strong beer and cherry-brandy,

had been done ample justice to; "what say you to an hour on the ice? We shall have plenty of time."

"Capital!" said Mr. Benjamin Allen.

"Prime!" ejaculated Mr. Bob Sawyer.

"You skate of course, Winkle?" said Wardle.

"Ye — yes; oh, yes;" replied Mr. Winkle. "I — I — am *rather* out of practice."

"Oh, *do* skate, Mr. Winkle," said Arabella. "I like to see it so much."

"Oh, it is *so* graceful," said another young lady.

A third young lady said it was elegant, and a fourth expressed her opinion that it was "swan-like."

"I should be very happy, I'm sure," said Mr. Winkle, reddening; "but I have no skates."

This objection was at once overruled. Trundle had a couple of pair, and the fat boy announced that there were half-a-dozen more, down-stairs: whereat Mr. Winkle expressed exquisite delight, and looked exquisitely uncomfortable.

Old Wardle led the way to a pretty large sheet of ice; and the fat boy and Mr. Weller, having shovelled and swept away the snow which had fallen on it during the night, Mr. Bob Sawyer adjusted his skates with a dexterity which to Mr. Winkle was perfectly marvellous, and described circles with his left leg, and cut figures of eight; and inscribed upon the ice, without once stopping for breath, a great many other pleasant and astonishing devices, to the excessive satisfaction of Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Tupman, and the ladies: which reached a pitch of positive enthusiasm, when old Wardle and Benjamin Allen, assisted by the aforesaid Bob Sawyer, performed some mystic evolutions which they called a reel.

All this time, Mr. Winkle, with his face and hands

blue with the cold, had been forcing a gimlet into the soles of his feet, and putting his skates on, with the points behind, and getting the straps into a very complicated and entangled state, with the assistance of Mr. Snodgrass, who knew rather less about skates than a Hindoo. At length, however, with the assistance of Mr. Weller, the unfortunate skates were firmly screwed and buckled on, and Mr. Winkle was raised to his feet.

"Now, then, sir," said Sam in an encouraging tone; "off vith you, and show 'em how to do it."

"Stop, Sam, stop!" said Mr. Winkle, trembling violently, and clutching hold of Sam's arms with the grasp of a drowning man. "How slippery it is, Sam!"

"Not an uncommon thing upon ice, sir," replied Mr. Weller. "Hold up, sir!"

This last observation of Mr. Weller's bore reference to a demonstration Mr. Winkle made at the instant, of a frantic desire to throw his feet in the air, and dash the back of his head on the ice.

"These — these — are very awkward skates; a'n't they, Sam?" inquired Mr. Winkle, staggering.

"I'm afeerd there's an orkard gen'l'm'n in 'em, sir," replied Sam.

"Now, Winkle," cried Mr. Pickwick, quite unconscious that there was anything the matter. "Come; the ladies are all anxiety."

"Yes, yes," replied Mr. Winkle, with a ghastly smile. "I'm coming."

"Just a-goin' to begin," said Sam, endeavoring to disengage himself. "Now, sir, start off!"

"Stop an instant, Sam," gasped Mr. Winkle, clinging most affectionately to Mr. Weller. "I find I've got a couple of coats at home, that I don't want, Sam. You may have them, Sam."

"Thank'ee, sir," replied Mr. Weller.

"Never mind touching your hat, Sam," said Mr. Winkle, hastily. "You needn't take your hand away, to do that. I meant to have given you five shillings this morning for a Christmas-box, Sam. I'll give it you this afternoon, Sam."

"You're wery good, sir," replied Mr. Weller.

"Just hold me at first, Sam; will you?" said Mr. Winkle. "There — that's right. I shall soon get in the way of it, Sam. Not too fast, Sam; not too fast."

Mr. Winkle, stooping forward with his body half doubled up, was being assisted over the ice by Mr. Weller, in a very singular and un-swan-like manner, when Mr. Pickwick most innocently shouted from the opposite bank:

"Sam!"

"Sir?" said Mr. Weller.

"Here. I want you."

"Let go, sir," said Sam. "Don't you hear the governor a-callin'? Let go, sir."

With a violent effort, Mr. Weller disengaged himself from the grasp of the agonized Pickwickian; and, in so doing, administered a considerable impetus to the unhappy Mr. Winkle. With an accuracy which no degree of dexterity or practice could have insured, that unfortunate gentleman bore swiftly down into the centre of the reel, at the very moment when Mr. Bob Sawyer was performing a flourish of unparalleled beauty. Mr. Winkle struck wildly against him, and with a loud crash they both fell heavily down. Mr. Pickwick ran to the spot. Bob Sawyer had risen to his feet, but Mr. Winkle was far too wise to do anything of the kind, in skates. He was seated on the ice, making spasmodic

efforts to smile; but anguish was depicted on every lineament of his countenance.

"Are you hurt?" inquired Mr. Benjamin Allen, with great anxiety.

"Not much," said Mr. Winkle, rubbing his back very hard.

"I wish you'd let me bleed you," said Mr. Benjamin, with great eagerness.

"No, thank you," replied Mr. Winkle hurriedly.

"I really think you had better," said Allen.

"Thank you," replied Mr. Winkle; "I'd rather not."

"What do you think, Mr. Pickwick?" inquired Bob Sawyer.

Mr. Pickwick was excited and indignant. He beckoned to Mr. Weller, and said in a stern voice, "Take his skates off."

"No; but really I had scarcely begun," remonstrated Mr. Winkle.

"Take his skates off," repeated Mr. Pickwick firmly.

The command was not to be resisted. Mr. Winkle allowed Sam to obey it, in silence.

"Lift him up," said Mr. Pickwick. Sam assisted him to rise.

Mr. Pickwick retired a few paces apart from the bystanders; and, beckoning his friend to approach, fixed a searching look upon him, and uttered in a low, but distinct and emphatic tone, these remarkable words:

"You're a humbug, sir."

"A what?" said Mr. Winkle, starting.

"A humbug, sir. I will speak plainer, if you wish it. An impostor, sir."

With these words, Mr. Pickwick turned slowly on his heel, and rejoined his friends.

While Mr. Pickwick was delivering himself of the sentiment just recorded, Mr. Weller and the fat boy, having by their joint endeavors cut out a slide, were exercising themselves thereupon, in a very masterly and brilliant manner. Sam Weller, in particular, was displaying that beautiful feat of fancy-sliding which is currently denominated "knocking at the cobbler's door," and which is achieved by skimming over the ice on one foot, and occasionally giving a twopenny postman's knock upon it, with the other. It was a good long slide, and there was something in the motion which Mr. Pickwick, who was very cold with standing still, could not help envying.

"It looks a nice warm exercise that, doesn't it?" he inquired of Wardle, when that gentleman was thoroughly out of breath, by reason of the indefatigable manner in which he had converted his legs into a pair of compasses, and drawn complicated problems on the ice.

"Ah, it does, indeed," replied Wardle. "Do you slide?"

"I used to do so, on the gutters, when I was a boy," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"Try it now," said Wardle.

"Oh do, please, Mr. Pickwick," cried all the ladies.

"I should be very happy to afford you any amusement," replied Mr. Pickwick, "but I haven't done such a thing these thirty years."

"Pooh! pooh! nonsense!" said Wardle, dragging off his skates with the impetuosity which characterized all his proceedings. "Here; I'll keep you company; come along." And away went the good-tempered old fellow down the slide, with a rapidity which came very close upon Mr. Weller, and beat the fat boy all to nothing.

Mr. Pickwick paused, considered, pulled off his gloves and put them in his hat: took two or three short runs: baulked himself as often; and at last took another run, and went slowly and gravely down the slide, with his feet about a yard and a quarter apart, amidst the gratified shouts of all the spectators.

"Keep the pot a-bilin', sir!" said Sam; and down went Wardle again, and then Mr. Pickwick, and then Sam, and then Mr. Winkle, and then Mr. Bob Sawyer, and then the fat boy, and then Mr. Snodgrass, following closely upon each other's heels, and running after each other with as much eagerness as if all their future prospects in life depended on their expedition.

It was the most intensely interesting thing, to observe the manner in which Mr. Pickwick performed his share in the ceremony: to watch the torture of anxiety with which he viewed the person behind, gaining upon him at the imminent hazard of tripping him up: to see him gradually expend the painful force which he had put on at first, and turn slowly round on the slide, with his face towards the point from which he had started: to contemplate the playful smile which mantled on his face when he had accomplished the distance, and the eagerness with which he turned round when he had done so, and ran after his predecessor: his black gaiters tripping pleasantly through the snow, and his eyes beaming cheerfulness and gladness through his spectacles. And when he was knocked down (which happened upon the average every third round), it was the most invigorating sight that can possibly be imagined, to behold him gather up his hat, gloves, and handkerchief, with a glowing countenance, and resume his station in the rank, with an ardor and enthusiasm that nothing could abate.

The sport was at its height, the sliding was at the quickest, the laughter was at the loudest, when a sharp smart crack was heard. There was a quick rush towards the bank, a wild scream from the ladies, and a shout from Mr. Tupman. A large mass of ice disappeared; the water bubbled up over it; Mr. Pickwick's hat, gloves, and handkerchief were floating on the surface; and this was all of Mr. Pickwick that anybody could see.

Dismay and anguish were depicted on every countenance; the males turned pale, and the females fainted; Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle grasped each other by the hand, and gazed at the spot where their leader had gone down, with frenzied eagerness; while Mr. Tupman, by way of rendering the promptest assistance, and at the same time conveying to any persons who might be within hearing, the clearest possible notion of the catastrophe, ran off across the country at his utmost speed, screaming "Fire!" with all his might.

It was at this very moment, when old Wardle and Sam Weller were approaching the hole with cautious steps, and Mr. Benjamin Allen was holding a hurried consultation with Mr. Bob Sawyer, on the advisability of bleeding the company generally, as an improving little bit of professional practice — it was at this very moment that a face, head, and shoulders emerged from beneath the water, and disclosed the features and spectacles of Mr. Pickwick.

"Keep yourself up for an instant — for only one instant," bawled Mr. Snodgrass.

"Yes, do; let me implore you — for my sake," roared Mr. Winkle, deeply affected. The adjuration was rather unnecessary; the probability being, that if Mr. Pickwick had declined to keep himself up for anybody else's sake,

it would have occurred to him that he might as well do so, for his own.

"Do you feel the bottom there, old fellow?" said Wardle.

"Yes, certainly," replied Mr. Pickwick, wringing the water from his head and face, and gasping for breath. "I fell upon my back. I couldn't get on my feet at first."

The clay upon so much of Mr. Pickwick's coat as was yet visible, bore testimony to the accuracy of this statement; and as the fears of the spectators were still further relieved by the fat boy's suddenly recollecting that the water was nowhere more than five feet deep, prodigies of valor were performed to get him out. After a vast quantity of splashing, and cracking, and struggling, Mr. Pickwick was at length fairly extricated from his unpleasant position, and once more stood on dry land.

"Oh, he'll catch his death of cold," said Emily.

"Dear old thing!" said Arabella. "Let me wrap this shawl round you, Mr. Pickwick."

"Ah, that's the best thing you can do," said Wardle; "and when you've got it on, run home as fast as your legs can carry you, and jump into bed directly."

A dozen shawls were offered on the instant. Three or four of the thickest having been selected, Mr. Pickwick was wrapped up, and started off, under the guidance of Mr. Weller: presenting the singular phenomenon of an elderly gentleman, dripping wet, and without a hat, with his arms bound down to his sides, skimming over the ground, without any clearly defined purpose, at the rate of six good English miles an hour.

But Mr. Pickwick cared not for appearances in such an extreme case, and urged on by Sam Weller, he kept

at the very top of his speed until he reached the door of Manor Farm, where Mr. Tupman had arrived some five minutes before, and had frightened the old lady into palpitations of the heart, by impressing her with the unalterable conviction that the kitchen chimney was on fire — a calamity which always presented itself in glowing colors to the old lady's mind, when anybody about her evinced the smallest agitation.

Mr. Pickwick paused not an instant until he was snug in bed. Sam Weller lighted a blazing fire in the room, and took up his dinner; a bowl of punch was carried up afterwards, and a grand carouse held in honor of his safety. Old Wardle would not hear of his rising, so they made the bed the chair, and Mr. Pickwick presided. A second and a third bowl were ordered in; and when Mr. Pickwick awoke next morning, there was not a symptom of rheumatism about him: which proves, as Mr. Bob Sawyer very justly observed, that there is nothing like hot punch in such cases: and that if ever hot punch did fail to act as a preventive, it was merely because the patient fell into the vulgar error of not taking enough of it.

The jovial party broke up next morning. Breakings up are capital things in our school-days, but in after life they are painful enough. Death, self-interest, and fortune's changes, are every day breaking up many a happy group, and scattering them far and wide; and the boys and girls never come back again. We do not mean to say that it was exactly the case in this particular instance; all we wish to inform the reader is, that the different members of the party dispersed to their several homes; that Mr. Pickwick and his friends once more took their seats on the top of the Muggleton coach; and

that Arabella Allen repaired to her place of destination, wherever it might have been — we dare say Mr. Winkle knew, but we confess we don't — under the care and guardianship of her brother Benjamin, and his most intimate and particular friend, Mr. Bob Sawyer.

Before they separated, however, that gentleman and Mr. Benjamin Allen drew Mr. Pickwick aside with an air of some mystery; and Mr. Bob Sawyer thrusting his forefinger between two of Mr. Pickwick's ribs, and thereby displaying his native drollery, and his knowledge of the anatomy of the human frame, at one and the same time, inquired:

"I say, old boy, where do you hang out?"

Mr. Pickwick replied that he was at present suspended at the George and Vulture.

"I wish you'd come and see me," said Bob Sawyer.

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"There's my lodgings," said Mr. Bob Sawyer, producing a card, "Lant Street, Borough; it's near Guy's, and handy for me, you know. Little distance after you've passed Saint George's Church — turns out of the High street on the right hand side the way."

"I shall find it," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Come on Thursday fortnight, and bring the other chaps with you," said Mr. Bob Sawyer, "I'm going to have a few medical fellows that night."

Mr. Pickwick expressed the pleasure it would afford him to meet the medical fellows; and after Mr. Bob Sawyer had informed him that he meant to be very cosy, and that his friend Ben was to be one of the party, they shook hands and separated.

We feel that in this place we lay ourself open to the

inquiry whether Mr. Winkle was whispering, during this brief conversation, to Arabella Allen: and if so, what he said; and furthermore, whether Mr. Snodgrass was conversing apart with Emily Wardle: and if so, what *he* said. To this, we reply, that whatever they might have said to the ladies, they said nothing at all to Mr. Pickwick or Mr. Tupman for eight-and-twenty miles, and that they sighed very often, refused ale and brandy, and looked gloomy. If our observant lady readers can deduce any satisfactory inferences from these facts, we beg them by all means to do so.

CHAPTER XXXI.

WHICH IS ALL ABOUT THE LAW, AND SUNDRY GREAT AUTHORITIES LEARNED THEREIN.

Scattered about in various holes and corners of the Temple, are certain dark and dirty chambers, in and out of which, all the morning in Vacation, and half the evening too in Term time, there may be seen constantly hurrying with bundles of papers under their arms, and protruding from their pockets, an almost uninterrupted succession of Lawyers' Clerks. There are several grades of Lawyers' Clerks. There is the Articled Clerk, who has paid a premium, and is an attorney in perspective, who runs a tailor's bill, receives invitations to parties, knows a family in Gower Street, and another in Tavistock Square: who goes out of town every Long Vacation to see his father, who keeps live horses innumerable; and who is, in short, the very aristocrat of clerks. There is the salaried clerk — out of door, or in door, as the case may be — who devotes the major part of his thirty shillings a week to his personal pleasure and adornment, repairs half-price to the Adelphi Theatre at least three times a week, dissipates majestically at the cider cellars afterwards, and is a dirty caricature of the fashion which expired six months ago. There is the middle-aged copying clerk, with a large family, who is always shabby, and

often drunk. And there are the office lads in their first surtouts, who feel a befitting contempt for boys at day-schools: club as they go home at night, for saveloys and porter: and think there's nothing like "life." There are varieties of the genus, too numerous to recapitulate, but however numerous they may be, they are all to be seen at certain regulated business hours, hurrying to and from the places we have just mentioned.

These sequestered nooks are the public offices of the legal profession, where writs are issued, judgments signed, declarations filed, and numerous other ingenious little machines put in motion for the torture and torment of His Majesty's liege subjects, and the comfort and emolument of the practitioners of the law. They are, for the most part, low-roofed, mouldy rooms, where innumerable rolls of parchment, which have been perspiring in secret for the last century, send forth an agreeable odor, which is mingled by day with the scent of the dry rot, and by night with the various exhalations which arise from damp cloaks, festering umbrellas, and the coarsest tallow candles.

About half-past seven o'clock in the evening, some ten days or a fortnight after Mr. Pickwick and his friends returned to London, there hurried into one of these offices, an individual in a brown coat and brass buttons, whose long hair was scrupulously twisted round the rim of his napless hat, and whose soiled drab trousers were so tightly strapped over his Blucher boots, that his knees threatened every moment to start from their concealment. He produced from his coat-pockets a long and narrow strip of parchment, on which the presiding functionary impressed an illegible black stamp. He then drew forth four scraps of paper, of similar dimensions, each containing a printed copy of the strip of parchment

with blanks for a name; and having filled up the blanks, put all the five documents in his pocket, and hurried away.

The man in the brown coat, with the cabalistic documents in his pocket, was no other than our old acquaintance Mr. Jackson, of the house of Dodson and Fogg, Freeman's Court, Cornhill. Instead of returning to the office from whence he came, however, he bent his steps direct to Sun Court, and walking straight into the George and Vulture, demanded to know whether one Mr. Pickwick was within.

"Call Mr. Pickwick's servant, Tom," said the barmaid of the George and Vulture.

"Don't trouble yourself," said Mr. Jackson, "I've come on business. If you'll show me Mr. Pickwick's room, I'll step up myself."

"What name, sir?" said the waiter.

"Jackson," replied the clerk.

The waiter stepped up-stairs to announce Mr. Jackson; but Mr. Jackson saved him the trouble by following close at his heels, and walking into the apartment before he could articulate a syllable.

Mr. Pickwick had, that day, invited his three friends to dinner; they were all seated round the fire, drinking their wine, when Mr. Jackson presented himself, as above described.

"How de do, sir?" said Mr. Jackson, nodding to Mr. Pickwick.

That gentleman bowed, and looked somewhat surprised, for the physiognomy of Mr. Jackson dwelt not in his recollection.

"I have called from Dodson and Fogg's," said Mr. Jackson, in an explanatory tone.

Mr. Pickwick roused at the name. "I refer you to my attorney, sir: Mr. Perker, of Gray's Inn," said he. "Waiter, show this gentleman out."

"Beg your pardon, Mr. Pickwick," said Jackson, deliberately depositing his hat on the floor, and drawing from his pocket the strip of parchment. "But personal service, by clerk or agent, in these cases, you know, Mr. Pickwick—nothing like caution, sir, in all legal forms?"

Here Mr. Jackson cast his eye on the parchment; and, resting his hands on the table, and looking round with a winning and persuasive smile, said, "Now come; don't let's have no words about such a little matter as this. Which of you gentlemen's name's Snodgrass?"

At this inquiry, Mr. Snodgrass gave such a very undisguised and palpable start, that no further reply was needed.

"Ah! I thought so," said Mr. Jackson, more affably than before. "I've got a little something to trouble you with, sir."

"Me!" exclaimed Mr. Snodgrass.

"It's only a *subpœna* in Bardell and Pickwick on behalf of the plaintiff," replied Jackson, singling out one of the slips of paper, and producing a shilling from his waistcoat-pocket. "It'll come on, in the settens after Term; fourteenth of Febooary, we expect; we've marked it a special jury cause, and it's only ten down the paper. That's yours, Mr. Snodgrass." As Jackson said this, he presented the parchment before the eyes of Mr. Snodgrass, and slipped the paper and the shilling into his hand.

Mr. Tupman had witnessed this process in silent astonishment, when Jackson, turning sharply upon him, said:

"I think I a'n't mistaken when I say your name's Tupman, am I?"

Mr. Tupman looked at Mr. Pickwick; but, perceiving no encouragement in that gentleman's widely-opened eyes to deny his name, said:

"Yes, my name *is* Tupman, sir."

"And that other gentleman's Mr. Winkle, I think," said Jackson.

Mr. Winkle faltered out a reply in the affirmative; and both gentlemen were forthwith invested with a slip of paper, and a shilling each, by the dexterous Mr. Jackson.

"Now," said Jackson, "I'm afraid you'll think me rather troublesome, but I want somebody else, if it a'n't inconvenient. I *have* Samuel Weller's name here, Mr. Pickwick."

"Send my servant here, waiter," said Mr. Pickwick. The waiter retired, considerably astonished, and Mr. Pickwick motioned Jackson to a seat.

There was a painful pause, which was at length broken by the innocent defendant.

"I suppose, sir," said Mr. Pickwick, his indignation rising while he spoke; "I suppose, sir, that it is the intention of your employers to seek to criminate me, upon the testimony of my own friends?"

Mr. Jackson struck his forefinger several times against the left side of his nose, to intimate that he was not there to disclose the secrets of the prison-house, and playfully rejoined,

"Not knowin', can't say."

"For what other reason, sir," pursued Mr. Pickwick, "are these subpœnas served upon them, if not for this?"

"Very good plant, Mr. Pickwick," replied Jackson,

slowly shaking his head. "But it won't do. No harm in trying, but there's little to be got out of me."

Here Mr. Jackson smiled once more upon the company; and, applying his left thumb to the tip of his nose, worked a visionary coffee-mill with his right hand: thereby performing a very graceful piece of pantomime (then much in vogue, but now, unhappily, almost obsolete) which was familiarly denominated "taking a grinder."

"No, no, Mr. Pickwick," said Jackson, in conclusion; "Perker's people must guess what we've served these subpœnas for. If they can't, they must wait till the action comes on, and then they'll find out."

Mr. Pickwick bestowed a look of excessive disgust on his unwelcome visitor, and would probably have hurled some tremendous anathema at the heads of Messrs. Dodson and Fogg, had not Sam's entrance at the instant interrupted him.

"Samuel Weller?" said Mr. Jackson, inquiringly.

"Vun o' the truest things as you've said for many a long year," replied Sam, in a most composed manner.

"Here's a subpœna for you, Mr. Weller," said Jackson.

"What's that in English?" inquired Sam.

"Here's the original," said Jackson, declining the required explanation.

"Which?" said Sam.

"This," replied Jackson, shaking the parchment.

"Oh, that's the 'rig'nal, is it?" said Sam. "Well, I'm wery glad I've seen the 'rig'nal, 'cos it's a gratifyin' sort o' thing, and eases vun's mind so much."

"And here's the shilling," said Jackson. "It's from Dodson and Fogg's."

"And it's uncommon handsome o' Dodson and Fogg,

as knows so little of me, to come down vith a present," said Sam. "I feel it as a wery high compliment, sir; it's a wery hon'rable thing to them, as they knows how to reward merit werever they meets it. Besides wich, it's affectin' to one's feelin's."

As Mr. Weller said this, he inflicted a little friction on his right eyelid, with the sleeve of his coat, after the most approved manner of actors when they are in domestic pathetics.

Mr. Jackson seemed rather puzzled by Sam's proceedings; but, as he had served the subpœnas, and had nothing more to say, he made a feint of putting on the one glove which he usually carried in his hand, for the sake of appearances; and returned to the office to report progress.

Mr. Pickwick slept little that night; his memory had received a very disagreeable refresher on the subject of Mrs. Bardell's action. He breakfasted betimes next morning; and, desiring Sam to accompany him, set forth towards Gray's Inn Square.

"Sam!" said Mr. Pickwick, looking round, when they got to the end of Cheapside.

"Sir?" said Sam, stepping up to his master.

"Which way?"

"Up Newgate Street."

Mr. Pickwick did not turn round immediately, but looked vacantly in Sam's face for a few seconds, and heaved a deep sigh.

"What's the matter, sir?" inquired Sam.

"This action, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, "is expected to come on, on the fourteenth of next month."

"Remarkable coin*ci*dence that 'ere, sir," replied Sam.

"Why remarkable, Sam?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Walentine's day, sir," responded Sam; "reg'lar good day for a breach o' promise trial."

Mr. Weller's smile awakened no gleam of mirth in his master's countenance. Mr. Pickwick turned abruptly round, and led the way in silence.

They had walked some distance: Mr. Pickwick trotting on before, plunged in profound meditation, and Sam following behind, with a countenance expressive of the most enviable and easy defiance of everything and everybody: when the latter, who was always especially anxious to impart to his master any exclusive information he possessed, quickened his pace until he was close at Mr. Pickwick's heels; and, pointing up at a house they were passing, said,

"Wery nice pork-shop that 'ere, sir."

"Yes, it seems so," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Celebrated Sassage-factory," said Sam.

"Is it?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Is it!" reiterated Sam with some indignation; "I should rayther think it was. Why sir, bless your innocent eyebrows, that's where the mysterious disappearance of a 'spectable tradesman took place, four years ago."

"You don't mean to say he was burked, Sam?" said Mr. Pickwick, looking hastily round.

"No I don't indeed, sir," replied Mr. Weller, "I wish I did; far worse than that. He was the master o' that 'ere shop, sir, and the inwenter o' that patent-never-leavin-off sassage steam-ingine, as ud swaller up a pavin' stone if you put it too near, and grind it into sassages as easy as if it was a tender young babby. Wery proud o' that machine he was, as it was nat'ral he should be; and he'd stand down in the cellar a lookin' at it, wen it was in full play, till he got quite melancholy with joy. A

wery happy man he'd ha' been, sir, in the procession o that 'ere ingine and two more lovely hinfants besides, if it hadn't been for his wife, who was a most ow-dacious wixin. She was always a follerin' him about, and dinnin' in his ears, till at last he couldn't stand it no longer. 'I'll tell you what it is, my dear,' he says one day; 'if you persewere in this here sort of amusement,' he says, 'I'm blessed if I don't go away to 'Merriker; and that's all about it.' 'You're a idle willin,' says she, 'and I wish the 'Merrikins joy of their barg'in.' Arter wich she keeps on abusin' of him for half an hour, and then runs into the little parlor behind the shop, sets to a-screamin', says he'll be the death on her, and falls in a fit, which lasts for three good hours — one o' them fits wich is all screamin' and kickin'. Well, next mornin', the husband was missin'. He hadn't taken nothin' from the till, — hadn't even put on his great-coat — so it was quite clear he warn't gone to 'Merriker. Didn't come back next day; didn't come back next week; Missis had bills printed, sayin' that, if he'd come back, he should be forgiven everythin', (which was very liberal, seein' that he hadn't done nothin' at all,) all the canals was dragged, and for two months artervards whenever a body turned up, it was carried, as a reg'lar thing, straight off to the sassage-shop. Hows'ever none on 'em answered, so they gave out that he'd run avay, and she kept on the bis'ness. One Saturday night, a little thin old gen'l'm'n comes into the shop in a great passion and says, 'Are you the missis o' this here shop?' 'Yes, I am,' says she. 'Well ma'am,' says he, 'then I've just looked in to say, that me and my family a'n't a-goin' to be choked for nothin'; and more than that, ma'am,' he says, 'you'll allow me to observe, that as you don't use the primest parts of the

meat in the manafacter o' sassages, I think you'd find beef come nearly as cheap as buttons.' 'As buttons, sir!' says she. 'Buttons, ma'am,' says the little old gentleman, unfolding a bit of paper, and showin' twenty or thirty halves o' buttons. 'Nice seasonin' for sassages, is trousers' buttons, ma'am.' 'They're my husband's buttons!' says the widder, beginnin' to faint. 'What!' screams the little old gen'l'm'n, turnin' wery pale. 'I see it all,' says the widder; 'in a fit of temporary insanity he rashly converted his-self into sassages!' And so he had, sir," said Mr. Weller, looking steadily into Mr. Pickwick's horror-stricken countenance, "or else he'd been draw'd into the ingine; but however that might ha' been, the little old gen'l'm'n, who had been remarkably partial to sassages all his life, rushed out o' the shop in a wild state, and was never heerd on, artervards!"

The relation of this affecting incident of private life, brought master and man to Mr. Perker's chambers. Lowten, holding the door half open, was in conversation with a rustily-clad, miserable looking man, in boots without toes, and gloves without fingers. There were traces of privation and suffering — almost of despair — in his lank and careworn countenance; he felt his poverty, for he shrunk to the dark side of the staircase as Mr. Pickwick approached.

"It's very unfortunate," said the stranger, with a sigh.

"Very," said Lowten, scribbling his name on the doorpost with his pen and rubbing it out again with the feather. "Will you leave a message for him?"

"When do you think he'll be back?" inquired the stranger.

"Quite uncertain," replied Lowten, winking at Mr. Pickwick, as the stranger cast his eyes towards the ground.

"You don't think it would be of any use my waiting for him?" said the stranger, looking wistfully into the office.

"Oh no, I'm sure it wouldn't," replied the clerk, moving a little more into the centre of the door-way. "He's certain not to be back this week, and it's a chance whether he will, next; for when Perker once gets out of town, he's never in a hurry to come back again."

"Out of town!" said Mr. Pickwick; "dear me, how unfortunate!"

"Don't go away, Mr. Pickwick," said Lowten, "I've got a letter for you." The stranger seeming to hesitate, once more looked towards the ground, and the clerk winked slyly at Mr. Pickwick, as if to intimate that some exquisite piece of humor was going forward; though what it was, Mr. Pickwick could not, for the life of him, divine.

"Step in, Mr. Pickwick," said Lowten. "Well, will you leave a message, Mr. Watty, or will you call again?"

"Ask him to be so kind as to leave out word what has been done in my business," said the man; "for God's sake don't neglect it, Mr. Lowten."

"No, no; I won't forget it," replied the clerk. "Walk in, Mr. Pickwick. Good morning, Mr. Watty; it's a fine day for walking, isn't it?" Seeing that the stranger still lingered, he beckoned Sam Weller to follow his master in, and shut the door in his face.

"There never was such a pestering bankrupt as that, since the world began, I do believe!" said Lowten, throwing down his pen with the air of an injured man. "His affairs haven't been in chancery quite four years yet, and I'm d—d if he don't come worrying here twice a week. Step this way, Mr. Pickwick. Perker *is* in, and he'll see you, I know. Devilish cold," he added

pettishly, "standing at that door, wasting one's time with such seedy vagabonds!" Having very vehemently stirred a particularly large fire with a particularly small poker, the clerk led the way to his principal's private room, and announced Mr. Pickwick.

"Ah, my dear sir," said little Mr. Perker, bustling up from his chair; "Well, my dear sir, and what's the news about your matter — eh? Anything more about our friends in Freeman's Court? They've not been sleeping, *I* know that. Ah, they're very smart fellows — very smart, indeed."

As the little man concluded, he took an emphatic pinch of snuff, as a tribute to the smartness of Messrs. Dodson and Fogg.

"They are great scoundrels," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Ay, ay," said the little man; "that's a matter of opinion, you know, and we won't dispute about terms; because of course you can't be expected to view these subjects with a professional eye. Well, we've done everything that's necessary. I have retained Sergeant Snubbin.

"Is he a good man?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Good man!" replied Perker; "bless your heart and soul, my dear sir, Sergeant Snubbin is at the very top of his profession. Gets treble the business of any man in court — engaged in every case. You needn't mention it abroad; but we say — we of the profession — that Sergeant Snubbin leads the court by the nose."

The little man took another pinch of snuff as he made this communication, and nodded mysteriously to Mr. Pickwick.

"They have subpœna'd my three friends," said Mr Pickwick.

"Ah! of course they would," replied Perker. "Important witnesses; saw you in a delicate situation."

"But she fainted of her own accord," said Mr. Pickwick. "She threw herself into my arms."

"Very likely, my dear sir," replied Perker; "very likely and very natural. Nothing more so, my dear sir — nothing. But who's to prove it?"

"They have subpœna'd my servant too," said Mr. Pickwick, quitting the other point; for there Mr. Perker's question had somewhat staggered him.

"Sam?" said Perker.

Mr. Pickwick replied in the affirmative.

"Of course, my dear sir; of course. I knew they would; I could have told *you* that, a month ago. You know, my dear sir, if you *will* take the management of your affairs into your own hands after intrusting them to your solicitor, you must also take the consequences." Here Mr. Perker drew himself up with conscious dignity, and brushed some stray grains of snuff from his shirt frill.

"And what do they want him to prove?" asked Mr. Pickwick, after two or three minutes' silence.

"That you sent him up to the plaintiff's to make some offer of a compromise, I suppose," replied Perker. "It don't matter much, though; I don't think many counsel could get a great deal out of *him*."

"I don't think they could," said Mr. Pickwick; smiling, despite his vexation, at the idea of Sam's appearance as a witness. "What course do we pursue?"

"We have only one to adopt, my dear sir," replied Perker; "cross-examine the witnesses; trust to Snubbin's eloquence; throw dust in the eyes of the judge; and ourselves on the jury."

"And suppose the verdict is against me?" said Mr. Pickwick.

Mr. Perker smiled, took a very long pinch of snuff, stirred the fire, shrugged his shoulders, and remained expressively silent.

"You mean that in that case I must pay the damages?" said Mr. Pickwick, who had watched this telegraphic answer with considerable sternness.

Perker gave the fire another very unnecessary poke, and said, "I am afraid so."

"Then I beg to announce to you, my unalterable determination to pay no damages whatever," said Mr. Pickwick, most emphatically. "None, Perker. Not a pound, not a penny, of my money, shall find its way into the pockets of Dodson and Fogg. That is my deliberate and irrevocable determination." Mr. Pickwick gave a heavy blow on the table before him, in confirmation of the irrevocability of his intention.

"Very well, my dear sir, very well," said Perker. "You know best, of course."

"Of course," replied Mr. Pickwick hastily. "Where does Sergeant Snubbin live?"

"In Lincoln's Inn Old Square," replied Perker.

"I should like to see him," said Mr. Pickwick.

"See Sergeant Snubbin, my dear sir!" rejoined Perker, in utter amazement. "Pooh, pooh, my dear sir, impossible. See Sergeant Snubbin! Bless you, my dear sir, such a thing was never heard of, without a consultation fee being previously paid, and a consultation fixed. It couldn't be done, my dear sir; it couldn't be done."

Mr. Pickwick, however, had made up his mind not only that it could be done, but that it should be done; and the consequence was, that within ten minutes after

he had received the assurance that the thing was impossible, he was conducted by his solicitor into the outer office of the great Sergeant Snubbin himself.

It was an uncarpeted room of tolerable dimensions, with a large writing-table drawn up near the fire: the baize top of which had long since lost all claim to its original hue of green, and had gradually grown gray with dust and age, except where all traces of its natural color were obliterated by ink-stains. Upon the table, were numerous little bundles of papers tied with red tape; and behind it, sat an elderly clerk, whose sleek appearance, and heavy gold watch-chain, presented imposing indications of the extensive and lucrative practice of Mr. Sergeant Snubbin.

"Is the Sergeant in his room, Mr. Mallard?" inquired Perker, offering his box with all imaginable courtesy.

"Yes he is," was the reply, "but he's very busy. Look here, not an opinion given yet, on any one of these cases; and an expedition fee paid with all of 'em." The clerk smiled as he said this, and inhaled the pinch of snuff with a zest which seemed to be compounded of a fondness for snuff and a relish for fees.

"Something like practice that," said Perker.

"Yes," said the barrister's clerk, producing his own box, and offering it with the greatest cordiality; "and the best of it is, that as nobody alive except myself can read the Sergeant's writing, they are obliged to wait for the opinions, when he has given them, till I have copied 'em, ha — ha — ha!"

"Which makes good for we know who, besides the Sergeant, and draws a little more out of the clients, eh?" said Perker; "Ha, ha, ha!" At this the Sergeant's clerk laughed again — not a noisy boisterous laugh, but

a silent internal chuckle, which Mr. Pickwick disliked to hear. When a man bleeds inwardly, it is a dangerous thing for himself; but when he laughs inwardly, it bodes no good to other people.

"You haven't made me out that little list of the fees that I'm in your debt, have you?" said Perker.

"No, I have not," replied the clerk.

"I wish you would," said Perker. "Let me have them, and I'll send you a check. But I suppose you're too busy pocketing the ready money, to think of the debtors, eh? ha, ha, ha!" This sally seemed to tickle the clerk amazingly, and he once more enjoyed a little quiet laugh to himself.

"But, Mr. Mallard, my dear friend," said Perker, suddenly recovering his gravity, and drawing the great man's great man into a corner, by the lappel of his coat; "you must persuade the Sergeant to see me, and my client here."

"Come, come," said the clerk, "that's not bad, either. See the Sergeant! come, that's too absurd." Notwithstanding the absurdity of the proposal, however, the clerk allowed himself to be gently drawn beyond the hearing of Mr. Pickwick; and after a short conversation conducted in whispers, walked softly down a little dark passage, and disappeared into the legal luminary's sanctum: whence he shortly returned on tiptoe, and informed Mr. Perker and Mr. Pickwick that the Sergeant had been prevailed upon, in violation of all established rules and customs, to admit them at once.

Mr. Serjeant Snubbin was a lantern-faced, sallow-complexioned man, of about five-and-forty, or — as the novels say — he might be fifty. He had that dull-looking boiled eye which is so often to be seen in the heads of people

who have applied themselves during many years to a weary and laborious course of study; and which would have been sufficient, without the additional eye-glass which dangled from a broad black ribbon round his neck, to warn a stranger that he was very near-sighted. His hair was thin and weak, which was partly attributable to his having never devoted much time to its arrangement, and partly to his having worn for five-and-twenty years the forensic wig which hung on a block beside him. The marks of hair-powder on his coat-collar, and the ill-washed and worse-tied white neckerchief round his throat, showed that he had not found leisure since he left the court to make any alteration in his dress: while the slovenly style of the remainder of his costume warranted the inference that his personal appearance would not have been very much improved if he had. Books of practice, heaps of papers, and opened letters, were scattered over the table, without any attempt at order or arrangement; the furniture of the room was old and rickety; the doors of the book-case were rotting in their hinges; the dust flew out from the carpet in little clouds at every step; the blinds were yellow with age and dirt; and the state of everything in the room showed, with a clearness not to be mistaken, that Mr. Sergeant Snubbin was far too much occupied with his professional pursuits to take any great heed or regard of his personal comforts.

The Sergeant was writing when his clients entered; he bowed abstractedly when Mr. Pickwick was introduced by his solicitor; and then, motioning them to a seat, put his pen carefully in the inkstand, nursed his left leg, and waited to be spoken to.

"Mr. Pickwick is the defendant in Bardell and Pickwick, Sergeant Snubbin," said Perker.

"I am retained in that, am I?" said the Sergeant.

"You are, sir," replied Perker.

The Sergeant nodded his head, and waited for something else.

"Mr. Pickwick was anxious to call upon you, Sergeant Snubbin," said Perker, "to state to you, before you entered upon the case, that he denies there being any ground or pretence whatever for the action against him; and that unless he came into court with clean hands, and without the most conscientious conviction that he was right in resisting the plaintiff's demand, he would not be there at all. I believe I state your views correctly; do I not, my dear sir?" said the little man, turning to Mr. Pickwick.

"Quite so," replied that gentleman.

Mr. Sergeant Snubbin unfolded his glasses, raised them to his eyes; and, after looking at Mr. Pickwick for a few seconds with great curiosity, turned to Mr. Perker, and said, smiling slightly as he spoke:

"Has Mr. Pickwick a strong case?"

The attorney shrugged his shoulders.

"Do you purpose calling witnesses?"

"No."

The smile on the Sergeant's countenance became more defined; he rocked his leg with increased violence and, throwing himself back in his easy-chair, coughed; dubiously.

These tokens of the Sergeant's presentiments on the subject, slight as they were, were not lost on Mr. Pickwick. He settled the spectacles, through which he had attentively regarded such demonstrations of the barrister's feeling as he had permitted himself to exhibit, more firmly on his nose; and said with great energy, and in utter disregard of all Mr. Perker's admonitory winkings and frownings:

"My wishing to wait upon you, for such a purpose as this, sir, appears, I have no doubt, to a gentleman who sees so much of these matters as you must necessarily do, a very extraordinary circumstance."

The Sergeant tried to look gravely at the fire, but the smile came back again.

"Gentlemen of your profession, sir," continued Mr. Pickwick, "see the worst side of human nature — all its disputes, its ill-will and bad blood, rise up before you. You know from your experience of juries (I mean no disparagement to you, or them) how much depends upon *effect:* and you are apt to attribute to others, a desire to use, for purposes of deception and self-interest, the very instruments which you, in pure honesty and honor of purpose, and with a laudable desire to do your utmost for your client, know the temper and worth of so well, from constantly employing them yourselves. I really believe that to this circumstance may be attributed the vulgar but very general notion of your being, as a body, suspicious, distrustful, and over-cautious. Conscious as I am, sir, of the disadvantage of making such a declaration to you, under such circumstances, I have come here, because I wish you distinctly to understand, as my friend Mr. Perker has said, that I am innocent of the falsehood laid to my charge; and although I am very well aware of the inestimable value of your assistance, sir, I must beg to add, that unless you sincerely believe this, I would rather be deprived of the aid of your talents than have the advantage of them."

Long before the close of this address, which we are bound to say was of a very prosy character for Mr. Pickwick, the Sergeant had relapsed into a state of abstraction. After some minutes, however, during which

he had reassumed his pen, he appeared to be again aware of the presence of his clients; and, raising his head from the paper, said, rather snappishly,

"Who's with me in this case?"

"Mr. Phunky, Sergeant Snubbin," replied the attorney.

"Phunky, Phunky," said the Sergeant; "I never heard the name before. He must be a very young man."

"Yes, he is a very young man," replied the attorney. "He was only called the other day. Let me see — he has not been at the Bar eight years yet."

"Ah, I thought not," said the Sergeant, in that sort of pitying tone in which ordinary folks would speak of a very helpless little child. "Mr. Mallard, send round to Mr. — Mr."—

"Phunky's — Holborn Court, Gray's Inn," interposed Perker. (Holborn Court, by the by, is South Square now). "Mr. Phunky, and say I should be glad if he'd step here, a moment."

Mr. Mallard departed to execute his commission; and Sergeant Snubbin relapsed into abstraction until Mr. Phunky himself was introduced.

Although an infant barrister, he was a full-grown man. He had a very nervous manner, and a painful hesitation in his speech; it did not appear to be a natural defect, but seemed rather the result of timidity, arising from the consciousness of being "kept down" by want of means, or interest, or connection, or impudence, as the case might be. He was overawed by the Sergeant, and profoundly courteous to the attorney.

"I have not had the pleasure of seeing you before, Mr. Phunky," said Sergeant Snubbin, with haughty condescension.

Mr. Phunky bowed. He *had* had the pleasure of seeing the Sergeant, and of envying him too, with all a poor man's envy, for eight years and a quarter.

"You are with me in this case, I understand?" said the Sergeant.

If Mr. Phunky had been a rich man, he would have instantly sent for his clerk to remind him; if he had been a wise one, he would have applied his forefinger to his forehead, and endeavored to recollect, whether, in the multiplicity of his engagements he had undertaken this one, or not; but as he was neither rich nor wise (in this sense at all events) he turned red, and bowed.

"Have you read the papers, Mr. Phunky?" inquired the Sergeant.

Here again, Mr. Phunky should have professed to have forgotten all about the merits of the case; but as he had read such papers as had been laid before him in the course of the action, and had thought of nothing else, waking or sleeping, throughout the two months during which he had been retained as Mr. Sergeant Snubbin's junior, he turned a deeper red, and bowed again.

"This is Mr. Pickwick," said the Sergeant, waving his pen in the direction in which that gentleman was standing.

Mr. Phunky bowed to Mr. Pickwick with the reverence which a first client must ever awaken; and again inclined his head towards his leader.

"Perhaps you will take Mr. Pickwick away," said the Sergeant, "and — and — and — hear anything Mr. Pickwick may wish to communicate. We shall have a consultation, of course." With this hint that he had been interrupted quite long enough, Mr. Sergeant Snubbin, who had been gradually growing more and more ab-

stracted, applied his glass to his eyes for an instant, bowed slightly round, and was once more deeply immersed in the case before him: which arose out of an interminable lawsuit, originating in the act of an individual, deceased a century or so ago, who had stopped up a pathway leading from some place which nobody ever came from, to some other place which nobody ever went to.

Mr. Phunky would not hear of passing through any door until Mr. Pickwick and his solicitor had passed through before him, so it was some time before they got into the Square; and when they did reach it, they walked up and down, and held a long conference, the result of which was, that it was a very difficult matter to say how the verdict would go; that nobody could presume to calculate on the issue of an action; that it was very lucky they had prevented the other party from getting Sergeant Snubbin; and other topics of doubt and consolation, common in such a position of affairs.

Mr. Weller was then roused by his master from a sweet sleep of an hour's duration; and, bidding adieu to Lowten, they returned to the City.

CHAPTER XXXII.

DESCRIBES, FAR MORE FULLY THAN THE COURT NEWSMAN EVER DID, A BACHELOR'S PARTY, GIVEN BY MR. BOB SAWYER AT HIS LODGINGS IN THE BOROUGH.

THERE is a repose about Lant Street, in the Borough, which sheds a gentle melancholy upon the soul. There are always a good many houses to let in the street; it is a by-street too, and its dulness is soothing. A house in Lant Street would not come within the denomination of a first-rate residence, in the strict acceptation of the term; but it is a most desirable spot nevertheless. If a man wished to abstract himself from the world; to remove himself from within the reach of temptation; to place himself beyond the possibility of any inducement to look out of the window; he should by all means go to Lant Street.

In this happy retreat are colonized a few clear-starchers, a sprinkling of journeymen bookbinders, one or two prison agents for the Insolvent Court, several small housekeepers who are employed in the Docks, a handful of mantua-makers, and a seasoning of jobbing tailors. The majority of the inhabitants either direct their energies to the letting of furnished apartments, or devote themselves to the healthful and invigorating pursuit of

mangling. The chief features in the still life of the street, are green shutters, lodging-bills, brass door-plates, and bell-handles; the principal specimens of animated nature, the pot-boy, the muffin youth, and the baked-potato man. The population is migratory, usually disappearing on the verge of quarter-day, and generally by night. His Majesty's revenues are seldom collected in this happy valley; the rents are dubious; and the water communication is very frequently cut off.

Mr. Bob Sawyer embellished one side of the fire, in his first-floor front, early on the evening for which he had invited Mr. Pickwick; and Mr. Ben Allen the other. The preparations for the reception of visitors appeared to be completed. The umbrellas in the passage had been heaped into the little corner outside the back-parlor door; the bonnet and shawl of the landlady's servant had been removed from the banisters; there were not more than two pairs of pattens on the street-door mat; and a kitchen candle, with a very long snuff, burnt cheerfully on the ledge of the staircase window. Mr. Bob Sawyer had himself purchased the spirits at a wine vault in High Street, and had returned home preceding the bearer thereof, to preclude the possibility of their delivery at the wrong house. The punch was ready-made in a red pan in the bed-room; a little table, covered with a green baize cloth, had been borrowed from the parlor, to play at cards on; and the glasses of the establishment, together with those which had been borrowed for the occasion from the public-house, were all drawn up in a tray, which was deposited on the landing outside the door.

Notwithstanding the highly satisfactory nature of all these arrangements, there was a cloud on the counte-

nance of Mr. Bob Sawyer, as he sat by the fireside. There was a sympathizing expression, too, in the features of Mr. Ben Allen, as he gazed intently on the coals; and a tone of melancholy in his voice, as he said, after a long silence:

"Well, it *is* unlucky she should have taken it in her head to turn sour, just on this occasion. She might at least have waited till to-morrow."

"That's her malevolence; that's her malevolence," returned Mr. Bob Sawyer, vehemently. "She says that if I can afford to give a party I ought to be able to afford to pay her confounded 'little bill.'"

"How long has it been running?" inquired Mr. Ben Allen. A bill, by the by, is the most extraordinary locomotive engine that the genius of man ever produced. It would keep on running during the longest lifetime, without ever once stopping of its own accord.

"Only a quarter, and a month or so," replied Mr. Bob Sawyer.

Ben Allen coughed hopelessly, and directed a searching look between the two top bars of the stove.

"It'll be a deuced unpleasant thing if she takes it into her head to let out, when those fellows are here, won't it?" said Mr. Ben Allen at length.

"Horrible," replied Bob Sawyer, "horrible."

A low tap was heard at the room door. Mr. Bob Sawyer looked expressively at his friend, and bade the tapper come in; whereupon a dirty slipshod girl in black cotton stockings, who might have passed for the neglected daughter of a superannuated dustman in very reduced circumstances, thrust in her head, and said,

"Please, Mister Sawyer, Missis Raddle wants to speak to *you*."

Before Mr. Bob Sawyer could return any answer, the girl suddenly disappeared with a jerk, as if somebody had given her a violent pull behind; this mysterious exit was no sooner accomplished, than there was another tap at the door — a smart pointed tap, which seemed to say, "Here I am, and in I'm coming."

Mr. Bob Sawyer glanced at his friend with a look of abject apprehension, and once more cried "Come in."

The permission was not at all necessary, for, before Mr. Bob Sawyer had uttered the words, a little fierce woman bounced into the room, all in a tremble with passion, and pale with rage.

"Now Mr. Sawyer," said the little fierce woman, trying to appear very calm, "If you'll have the kindness to settle that little bill of mine I'll thank you, because I've got my rent to pay this afternoon, and my landlord's awaiting below now." Here the little woman rubbed her hands, and looked steadily over Mr. Bob Sawyer's head, at the wall behind him.

"I am very sorry to put you to any inconvenience, Mrs. Raddle," said Bob Sawyer deferentially, "but" —

"Oh, it isn't any inconvenience," replied the little woman, with a shrill titter. "I didn't want it particular before to-day; leastways, as it has to go to my landlord directly, it was as well for you to keep it, as me. You promised me this afternoon, Mr. Sawyer, and every gentleman as has ever lived here, has kept his word, sir, as of course anybody as calls himself a gentleman, does." Mrs. Raddle tossed her head, bit her lips, rubbed her hands harder, and looked at the wall more steadily than ever. It was plain to see, as Mr. Bob Sawyer remarked in a style of Eastern allegory on a subsequent occasion, that she was "getting the steam up."

"I am very sorry, Mrs. Raddle," said Bob Sawyer with all imaginable humility, "but the fact is, that I have been disappointed in the City to-day."—Extraordinary place that city. An astonishing number of men always *are* getting disappointed there.

"Well, Mr. Sawyer," said Mrs. Raddle, planting herself firmly on a purple cauliflower in the Kidderminster carpet, "and what's that to me, sir?"

"I—I—have no doubt, Mrs. Raddle," said Bob Sawyer, blinking this last question, "that before the middle of next week we shall be able to set ourselves quite square, and go on, on a better system, afterwards."

This was all Mrs. Raddle wanted. She had bustled up to the apartment of the unlucky Bob Sawyer, so bent upon going into a passion, that, in all probability, payment would have rather disappointed her than otherwise. She was in excellent order for a little relaxation of the kind: having just exchanged a few introductory compliments with Mr. R. in the front kitchen.

"Do you suppose, Mr. Sawyer," said Mrs. Raddle, elevating her voice for the information of the neighbors, "do you suppose that I'm a-going day after day to let a fellar occupy my lodgings as never thinks of paying his rent, nor even the very money laid out for the fresh butter and lump sugar that's bought for his breakfast, and the very milk that's took in, at the street-door? Do you suppose a hard-working and industrious woman as has lived in this street for twenty year (ten year over the way, and nine year and three quarter in this very house) has nothing else to do, but to work herself to death after a parcel of lazy idle fellars, that are always smoking and drinking, and lounging, when they ought to

be glad to turn their hands to anything that would help 'em to pay their bills? Do you" —

"My good soul," interposed Mr. Benjamin Allen, soothingly.

"Have the goodness to keep your observashuns to yourself sir I beg," said Mrs. Raddle, suddenly arresting the rapid torrent of her speech, and addressing the third party with impressive slowness and solemnity. "I am not aweer, sir, that you have any right to address your conversation to me. I don't think I let these apartments to you, sir."

"No, you certainly did not," said Mr. Benjamin Allen.

"Very good, sir," responded Mrs. Raddle, with lofty politeness. "Then p'raps sir, you'll confine yourself to breaking the arms and legs of the poor people in the hospitals, and keep yourself *to* yourself sir, or there may be some persons here as will make you, sir."

"But you are such an unreasonable woman," remonstrated Mr. Benjamin Allen.

"I beg your parding, young man," said Mrs. Raddle, in a cold perspiration of anger. "But will you have the goodness just to call me that, again, sir?"

"I didn't make use of the word in any invidious sense, ma'am," replied Mr. Benjamin Allen, growing somewhat uneasy on his own account.

"I beg your parding, young man," demanded Mrs. Raddle in a louder and more imperative tone. "But who do you call a woman? Did you make that remark to me, sir?"

"Why, bless my heart!" said Mr. Benjamin Allen.

"Did you apply that name to me, I ask of you, sir?" interrupted Mrs. Raddle with intense fierceness, throwing the door wide open.

"Why, of course I did," replied Mr. Benjamin Allen.

"Yes, of course you did," said Mrs. Raddle, backing gradually to the door, and raising her voice to its loudest pitch, for the special behoof of Mr. Raddle in the kitchen. "Yes, of course you did! And everybody knows that they may safely insult me in my own 'ouse while my husband sits sleeping down-stairs, and taking no more notice than if I was a dog in the streets. He ought to be ashamed of himself (here Mrs. Raddle sobbed) to allow his wife to be treated in this way by a parcel of young cutters and carvers of live people's bodies, that disgraces the lodgings (another sob), and leaving her exposed to all manner of abuse; a base fainthearted, timorous wretch, that's afraid to come up-stairs, and face the ruffi'nly creatures — that's afraid — that's afraid to come!" Mrs. Raddle paused to listen whether the repetition of the taunt had roused her better half; and, finding that it had not been successful, proceeded to descend the stairs with sobs innumerable: when there came a loud double knock at the street-door: whereupon she burst into an hysterical fit of weeping, accompanied with dismal moans, which was prolonged until the knock had been repeated six times, when, in an uncontrollable burst of mental agony, she threw down all the umbrellas, and disappeared into the back parlor, closing the door after her with an awful crash.

"Does Mr. Sawyer live here?" said Mr. Pickwick, when the door was opened.

"Yes," said the girl, "first floor. It's the door straight afore you, when you gets to the top of the stairs." Having given this instruction, the handmaid, who had been brought up among the aboriginal inhabitants of Southwark, disappeared, with the candle in her

hand, down the kitchen stairs: perfectly satisfied that she had done everything that could possibly be required of her under the circumstances.

Mr. Snodgrass, who entered last, secured the street-door, after several ineffectual efforts, by putting up the chain; and the friends stumbled up-stairs, where they were received by Mr. Bob Sawyer, who had been afraid to go down, lest he should be waylaid by Mrs. Raddle.

"How are you?" said the discomfited student — "Glad to see you, — take care of the glasses." This caution was addressed to Mr. Pickwick, who had put his hat in the tray.

"Dear me," said Mr. Pickwick, "I beg your pardon."

"Don't mention it, don't mention it," said Bob Sawyer. "I'm rather confined for room here, but you must put up with all that, when you come to see a young bachelor. Walk in. You've seen this gentleman before, I think?" Mr. Pickwick shook hands with Mr. Benjamin Allen, and his friends followed his example. They had scarcely taken their seats when there was another double knock.

"I hope that's Jack Hopkins!" said Mr. Bob Sawyer. "Hush. Yes, it is. Come up, Jack; come up."

A heavy footstep was heard upon the stairs, and Jack Hopkins presented himself. He wore a black velvet waistcoat, with thunder and lightning buttons; and a blue striped shirt, with a white false collar.

"You're late, Jack?" said Mr. Benjamin Allen.

"Been detained at Bartholomew's," replied Hopkins.

"Anything new?"

"No, nothing particular. Rather a good accident brought into the casualty ward."

"What was that, sir?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Only a man fallen out of a four pair of stairs' window; — but it's a very fair case — very fair case indeed."

"Do you mean that the patient is in a fair way to recover?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"No," replied Hopkins, carelessly. "No, I should rather say he wouldn't. There must be a splendid operation though, to-morrow — magnificent sight if Slasher does it."

"You consider Mr. Slasher a good operator?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Best alive," replied Hopkins. "Took a boy's leg out of the socket last week — boy ate five apples and a gingerbread cake — exactly two minutes after it was all over, boy said he wouldn't lie there to be made game of; and he'd tell his mother if they didn't begin."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Pickwick, astonished.

"Pooh! that's nothing, that a'n't," said Jack Hopkins. "Is it, Bob?"

"Nothing at all," replied Mr. Bob Sawyer.

"By the by, Bob," said Hopkins, with a scarcely perceptible glance at Mr. Pickwick's attentive face, "we had a curious accident last night. A child was brought in, who had swallowed a necklace."

"Swallowed what, sir?" interrupted Mr. Pickwick.

"A necklace," replied Jack Hopkins. "Not all at once, you know, that would be too much — *you* couldn't swallow that if the child did — eh, Mr. Pickwick, ha! ha!" Mr. Hopkins appeared highly gratified with his own pleasantry; and continued — "No, the way was this; — child's parents were poor people who lived in a court. Child's eldest sister bought a necklace, — common neck-

lace, made of large black wooden beads. Child, being fond of toys, cribbed the necklace, hid it, played with it, cut the string, and swallowed a bead. Child thought it capital fun, went back next day, and swallowed another bead."

"Bless my heart," said Mr. Pickwick, "what a dreadful thing! I beg your pardon, sir. Go on."

"Next day, child swallowed two beads; the day after that, he treated himself to three, and so on, till in a week's time he had got through the necklace — five-and-twenty beads in all. The sister, who was an industrious girl, and seldom treated herself to a bit of finery, cried her eyes out, at the loss of the necklace; looked high and low for it; but, I needn't say, didn't find it. A few days afterwards, the family were at dinner — baked shoulder of mutton, and potatoes under it — the child, who wasn't hungry, was playing about the room, when suddenly there was heard a devil of a noise, like a small hail storm. 'Don't do that, my boy,' said the father. 'I a'n't a doin' nothing,' said the child. 'Well, don't do it again,' said the father. There was a short silence, and then the noise began again, worse than ever. 'If you don't mind what I say, my boy,' said the father, 'you'll find yourself in bed, in something less than a pig's whisper.' He gave the child a shake to make him obedient, and such a rattling ensued as nobody ever heard before. 'Why, damme, it's *in* the child!' said the father, 'he's got the croup in the wrong place!' 'No I haven't father,' said the child, beginning to cry, 'it's the necklace; I swallowed it, father.' — The father caught the child up, and ran with him to the hospital: the beads in the boy's stomach rattling all the way with the jolting; and the people looking up in the air, and down in the cellars, to

see where the unusual sound came from. He's in the hospital now," said Jack Hopkins, "and he makes such a devil of a noise when he walks about, that they're obliged to muffle him in a watchman's coat, for fear he should wake the patients!"

"That's the most extraordinary case I ever heard of," said Mr. Pickwick, with an emphatic blow on the table.

"Oh, that's nothing," said Jack Hopkins; "is it, Bob?"

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Bob Sawyer.

"Very singular things occur in our profession, I can assure you, sir," said Hopkins.

"So I should be disposed to imagine," replied Mr. Pickwick.

Another knock at the door, announced a large-headed young man in a black wig, who brought with him a scorbutic youth in a long stock. The next comer was a gentleman in a shirt emblazoned with pink anchors, who was closely followed by a pale youth with a plated watchguard. The arrival of a prim personage in clean linen and cloth boots rendered the party complete. The little table with the green baize cover was wheeled out; the first instalment of punch was brought in, in a white jug; and the succeeding three hours were devoted to *vingt-et-un* at sixpence a dozen, which was only once interrupted by a slight dispute between the scorbutic youth and the gentleman with the pink anchors; in the course of which, the scorbutic youth intimated a burning desire to pull the nose of the gentleman with the emblems of hope: in reply to which, that individual expressed his decided unwillingness to accept of any "sauce" on gratuitous terms, either from the irascible young gentleman with the scor-

butic countenance, or any other person who was ornamented with a head.

When the last "natural" had been declared, and the profit and loss account of fish and sixpences adjusted, to the satisfaction of all parties, Mr. Bob Sawyer rang for supper, and the visitors squeezed themselves into corners while it was getting ready.

It was not so easily got ready as some people may imagine. First of all, it was necessary to awaken the girl, who had fallen asleep with her face on the kitchen table; this took a little time, and, even when she did answer the bell, another quarter of an hour was consumed in fruitless endeavors to impart to her a faint and distant glimmering of reason. The man to whom the order for the oysters had been sent, had not been told to open them; it is a very difficult thing to open an oyster with a limp knife or a two-pronged fork: and very little was done in this way. Very little of the beef was done either; and the ham (which was also from the German-sausage shop round the corner) was in a similar predicament. However, there was plenty of porter in a tin can; and the cheese went a great way, for it was very strong. So upon the whole, perhaps, the supper was quite as good as such matters usually are.

After supper, another jug of punch was put upon the table, together with a paper of cigars, and a couple of bottles of spirits. Then, there was an awful pause; and this awful pause was occasioned by a very common occurrence in this sort of places, but a very embarrassing one notwithstanding.

The fact is, the girl was washing the glasses. The establishment boasted four; we do not record the circumstance as at all derogatory to Mrs. Raddle, for there

never was a lodging-house yet, that was not short of glasses. The landlady's glasses were little thin blown glass tumblers, and those which had been borrowed from the public-house were great dropsical, bloated articles, each supported on a huge gouty leg. This would have been in itself sufficient to have possessed the company with the real state of affairs; but the young woman of all work had prevented the possibility of any misconception arising in the mind of any gentleman upon the subject, by forcibly dragging every man's glass away, long before he had finished his beer, and audibly stating, despite the winks and interruptions of Mr. Bob Sawyer, that it was to be conveyed down-stairs, and washed forthwith.

It is a very ill wind that blows nobody any good. The prim man in the cloth boots, who had been unsuccessfully attempting to make a joke during the whole time the round game lasted, saw his opportunity, and availed himself of it. The instant the glasses disappeared, he commenced a long story about a great public character, whose name he had forgotten, making a particularly happy reply to another eminent and illustrious individual whom he had never been able to identify. He enlarged at some length and with great minuteness upon divers collateral circumstances, distantly connected with the anecdote in hand, but for the life of him he couldn't recollect at that precise moment what the anecdote was, although he had been in the habit of telling the story with great applause for the last ten years.

"Dear me," said the prim man in the cloth boots, "it is a very extraordinary circumstance."

"I am sorry you have forgotten it," said Mr. Bob

Sawyer, glancing eagerly at the door, as he thought he heard the noise of glasses jingling — "very sorry."

"So am I," responded the prim man, "because I know it would have afforded so much amusement. Never mind; I dare say I shall manage to recollect it, in the course of half an hour or so."

The prim man arrived at this point, just as the glasses came back, when Mr. Bob Sawyer, who had been absorbed in attention during the whole time, said he should very much like to hear the end of it, for, so far as it went, it was, without exception, the very best story he had ever heard.

The sight of the tumblers restored Bob Sawyer to a degree of equanimity which he had not possessed since his interview with his landlady. His face brightened up, and he began to feel quite convivial.

"Now, Betsey," said Mr. Bob Sawyer, with great suavity, and dispersing, at the same time, the tumultuous little mob of glasses the girl had collected in the centre of the table; "now, Betsey, the warm water: be brisk, there's a good girl."

"You can't have no warm water," replied Betsey.

"No warm water!" exclaimed Mr. Bob Sawyer.

"No," said the girl, with a shake of the head which expressed a more decided negative than the most copious language could have conveyed. "Missis Raddle said you warn't to have none."

The surprise depicted on the countenances of his guests imparted new courage to the host.

"Bring up the warm water instantly — instantly!" said Mr. Bob Sawyer, with desperate sternness.

"No. I can't," replied the girl; "Missis Raddle raked out the kitchen fire afore she went to bed, and locked up the kittle."

"Oh, never mind; never mind. Pray don't disturb yourself about such a trifle," said Mr. Pickwick, observing the conflict of Bob Sawyer's passions, as depicted in his countenance, "cold water will do very well."

"Oh, admirably," said Mr. Benjamin Allen.

"My landlady is subject to some slight attacks of mental derangement," remarked Bob Sawyer with a ghastly smile; "I fear I must give her warning."

"No, don't," said Ben Allen.

"I fear I must," said Bob with heroic firmness. "I'll pay her what I owe her, and give her warning to-morrow morning." Poor fellow! how devoutly he wished he could!

Mr. Bob Sawyer's heart-sickening attempts to rally under this last blow communicated a dispiriting influence to the company, the greater part of whom, with the view of raising their spirits, attached themselves with extra cordiality to the cold brandy and water, the first perceptible effects of which were displayed in a renewal of hostilities between the scorbutic youth and the gentleman in the shirt. The belligerents vented their feelings of mutual contempt, for some time, in a variety of frownings and snortings, until at last the scorbutic youth felt it necessary to come to a more explicit understanding on the matter; when the following clear understanding took place.

"Sawyer," said the scorbutic youth, in a loud voice.

"Well, Noddy," replied Mr. Bob Sawyer.

"I should be very sorry, Sawyer," said Mr. Noddy, "to create any unpleasantness at any friend's table, and much less at yours, Sawyer, — very; but I must take this opportunity of informing Mr. Gunter that he is no gentleman."

"And *I* should be very sorry, Sawyer, to create any disturbance in the street in which you reside," said Mr. Gunter, "but I'm afraid I shall be under the necessity of alarming the neighbors by throwing the person who has just spoken, out o' window."

"What do you mean by that, sir?" inquired Mr. Noddy.

"What I say, sir," replied Mr. Gunter.

"I should like to see you do it, sir," said Mr. Noddy.

"You shall *feel* me do it in half a minute, sir," replied Mr. Gunter.

"I request that you'll favor me with your card, sir," said Mr. Noddy.

"I'll do nothing of the kind, sir," replied Mr. Gunter.

"Why not, sir?" inquired Mr. Noddy.

"Because you'll stick it up over your chimney-piece, and delude your visitors into the false belief that a gentleman has been to see you, sir," replied Mr. Gunter.

"Sir, a friend of mine shall wait on you in the morning," said Mr. Noddy.

"Sir, I'm very much obliged to you for the caution, and I'll leave particular directions with the servant to lock up the spoons," replied Mr. Gunter.

At this point the remainder of the guests interposed, and remonstrated with both parties on the impropriety of their conduct; on which Mr. Noddy begged to state that his father was quite as respectable as Mr. Gunter's father; to which Mr. Gunter replied that his father was to the full as respectable as Mr. Noddy's father, and that his father's son was as good a man as Mr. Noddy any day in the week. As this announcement seemed the

prelude to a recommencement of the dispute, there was another interference on the part of the company; and a vast quantity of talking and clamoring ensued, in the course of which Mr. Noddy gradually allowed his feelings to overpower him, and professed that he had ever entertained a devoted personal attachment towards Mr. Gunter. To this, Mr. Gunter replied that, upon the whole, he rather preferred Mr. Noddy to his own brother; on hearing which admission, Mr. Noddy magnanimously rose from his seat, and proffered his hand to Mr. Gunter. Mr. Gunter grasped it with affecting fervor; and everybody said that the whole dispute had been conducted in a manner which was highly honorable to both parties concerned.

"Now," said Jack Hopkins, "just to set us going again, Bob, I don't mind singing a song." And Hopkins, incited thereto by tumultuous applause, plunged himself at once into "The King, God bless him," which he sung as loud as he could, to a novel air, compounded of the "Bay of Biscay," and "A Frog he would." The chorus was the essence of the song; and, as each gentleman sung it to the tune he knew best, the effect was very striking indeed.

It was at the end of the chorus to the first verse, that Mr. Pickwick held up his hand in a listening attitude, and said, as soon as silence was restored,

"Hush! I beg your pardon. I thought I heard somebody calling from up-stairs."

A profound silence immediately ensued; and Mr. Bob Sawyer was observed to turn pale.

"I think I hear it now," said Mr. Pickwick. "Have the goodness to open the door."

The door was no sooner opened than all doubt on the subject was removed.

"Mr. Sawyer! Mr. Sawyer!" screamed a voice from the two-pair landing.

"It's my landlady," said Bob Sawyer, looking round him with great dismay. "Yes, Mrs. Raddle."

"What do you mean by this, Mr. Sawyer?" replied the voice, with great shrillness and rapidity of utterance. "A'n't it enough to be swindled out of one's rent, and money lent out of pocket besides, and abused and insulted by your friends that dares to call themselves men: without having the house turned out of window, and noise enough made to bring the fire-engines here at two o'clock in the morning? — Turn them wretches away."

"You ought to be ashamed of yourselves," said the voice of Mr. Raddle, which appeared to proceed from beneath some distant bedclothes.

"Ashamed of themselves!" said Mrs. Raddle. "Why don't you go down and knock 'em every one down-stairs? You would if you was a man."

"I should if I was a dozen men, my dear," replied Mr. Raddle, pacifically, "but they've the advantage of me in numbers, my dear."

"Ugh, you coward!" replied Mrs. Raddle, with supreme contempt. "*Do* you mean to turn them wretches out or not, Mr. Sawyer?"

"They're going, Mrs. Raddle, they're going," said the miserable Bob. "I am afraid you'd better go," said Mr. Bob Sawyer to his friends. "I *thought* you were making too much noise."

"It's a very unfortunate thing," said the prim man. "Just as we were getting so comfortable, too!" The prim man was just beginning to have a dawning recollection of the story he had forgotten.

"It's hardly to be borne," said the prim man, looking round. "Hardly to be borne, is it?"

"Not to be endured," replied Jack Hopkins; "let's have the other verse, Bob; come, here goes!"

"No, no, Jack, don't," interposed Bob Sawyer; "it's a capital song, but I am afraid we had better not have the other verse. They are very violent people, the people of the house."

"Shall I step up-stairs, and pitch into the landlord?" inquired Hopkins, "or keep on ringing the bell, or go and groan on the staircase? You may command me, Bob."

"I am very much indebted to you for your friendship and good nature, Hopkins," said the wretched Mr. Bob Sawyer; "but I think the best plan to avoid any further dispute is for us to break up at once."

"Now, Mr. Sawyer!" screamed the shrill voice of Mrs. Raddle, "*are* them brutes going?"

"They're only looking for their hats, Mrs. Raddle," said Bob; "they are going directly."

"Going!" said Mrs. Raddle, thrusting her nightcap over the banisters just as Mr. Pickwick, followed by Mr. Tupman, emerged from the sitting-room. "Going! What did they ever come for?"

"My dear ma'am" — remonstrated Mr. Pickwick, looking up.

"Get along with you, you old wretch!" replied Mrs. Raddle, hastily withdrawing the nightcap. "Old enough to be his grandfather, you vill'in! You're worse than any of 'em."

Mr. Pickwick found it in vain to protest his innocence, so hurried down-stairs into the street, whither he was closely followed by Mr. Tupman, Mr. Winkle, and Mr.

Snodgrass. Mr. Ben Allen, who was dismally depressed with spirits and agitation, accompanied them as far as London Bridge, and in the course of the walk confided to Mr. Winkle, as an especially eligible person to intrust the secret to, that he was resolved to cut the throat of any gentleman except Mr. Bob Sawyer who should aspire to the affections of his sister Arabella. Having expressed his determination to perform this painful duty of a brother with proper firmness, he burst into tears, knocked his hat over his eyes, and, making the best of his way back, knocked double knocks at the door of the Borough Market, and took short naps on the steps alternately, until daybreak, under the firm impression that he lived there, and had forgotten the key.

The visitors having all departed, in compliance with the rather pressing request of Mrs. Raddle, the luckless Mr. Bob Sawyer was left alone, to meditate on the probable events of the morrow, and the pleasures of the evening.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

MR. WELLER THE ELDER DELIVERS SOME CRITICAL SENTIMENTS RESPECTING LITERARY COMPOSITION; AND, ASSISTED BY HIS SON SAMUEL, PAYS A SMALL INSTALMENT OF RETALIATION TO THE ACCOUNT OF THE REVEREND GENTLEMAN WITH THE RED NOSE.

The morning of the thirteenth of February, which the readers of this authentic narrative know, as well as we do, to have been the day immediately preceding that which was appointed for the trial of Mrs. Bardell's action, was a busy time for Mr. Samuel Weller, who was perpetually engaged in travelling from the George and Vulture to Mr. Perker's chambers and back again, from and between the hours of nine o'clock in the morning and two in the afternoon, both inclusive. Not that there was anything whatever to be done, for the consultation had taken place, and the course of proceeding to be adopted, had been finally determined on; but Mr. Pickwick being in a most extreme state of excitement, persevered in constantly sending small notes to his attorney, merely containing the inquiry, "Dear Perker — Is all going on well?" to which Mr. Perker invariably forwarded the reply, "Dear Pickwick — As well as possible;" the fact being, as we have already hinted, that

there was nothing whatever to go on, either well or ill, until the sitting of the court on the following morning.

But people who go voluntarily to law, or are taken forcibly there, for the first time, may be allowed to labor under some temporary irritation and anxiety: and Sam, with a due allowance for the frailties of human nature, obeyed all his master's behests with that imperturbable good-humor and unruffable composure which formed one of his most striking and amiable characteristics.

Sam had solaced himself with a most agreeable little dinner, and was waiting at the bar for the glass of warm mixture in which Mr. Pickwick had requested him to drown the fatigues of his morning's walks, when a young boy of about three feet high, or thereabouts, in a hairy cap and fustian overalls, whose garb bespoke a laudable ambition to attain in time the elevation of an hostler, entered the passage of the George and Vulture, and looked first up the stairs, and then along the passage, and then into the bar, as if in search of somebody to whom he bore a commission; whereupon the barmaid, conceiving it not improbable that the said commission might be directed to the tea or table spoons of the establishment, accosted the boy with

"Now, young man, what do *you* want?"

"Is there anybody here named Sam?" inquired the youth, in a loud voice of treble quality.

"What's the t'other name?" said Sam Weller, looking round.

"How should I know?" briskly replied the young gentleman below the hairy cap.

"You're a sharp boy, you are," said Mr. Weller; "only I wouldn't show that wery fine edge too much, if I was you, in case anybody took it off. What do you

mean by comin' to a hot-el, and asking arter Sam, vith as much politeness as a vild Indian?"

"'Cos an old gen'l'm'n told me to," replied the boy.

"What old gen'l'm'n?" inquired Sam, with deep disdain.

"Him as drives a Ipswich coach, and uses our parlor," rejoined the boy. "He told me yesterday mornin' to come to the George in Wultur this arternoon, and ask for Sam."

"It's my father, my dear," said Mr. Weller, turning with an explanatory air to the young lady in the bar; "blessed if I think he hardly knows what my other name is. Vell, young brockiley sprout, wot then?"

"Why then," said the boy, "you wos to come to him at six o'clock to our 'ouse 'cos he wants to see you — Blue Boar, Leaden'all Markit. Shall I say you're comin'?"

"You *may* wentur on that 'ere statement, sir," replied Sam. And thus empowered, the young gentleman walked away, awakening all the echoes in George Yard as he did so, with several chaste and extremely correct imitations of a drover's whistle, delivered in a tone of peculiar richness and volume.

Mr. Weller having obtained leave of absence from Mr. Pickwick, who, in his then state of excitement and worry was by no means displeased at being left alone, set forth, long before the appointed hour, and having plenty of time at his disposal, sauntered down as far as the Mansion House, where he paused and contemplated, with a face of great calmness and philosophy, the numerous cads and drivers of short stages who assemble near that famous place of resort, to the great terror and confusion of the old-lady population of these realms. Having loi-

tered here, for half an hour or so, Mr. Weller turned, and began wending his way towards Leadenhall Market, through a variety of by streets and courts. As he was sauntering away his spare time, and stopped to look at almost every object that met his gaze, it is by no means surprising that Mr. Weller should have paused before a small stationer's and print-seller's window; but without further explanation it does appear surprising that his eyes should have no sooner rested on certain pictures which were exposed for sale therein, than he gave a sudden start, smote his right leg with great vehemence, and exclaimed with energy, "If it hadn't been for this, I should ha' forgot all about it, till it was too late!"

The particular picture on which Sam Weller's eyes were fixed, as he said this, was a highly colored representation of a couple of human hearts skewered together with an arrow, cooking before a cheerful fire, while a male and female cannibal in modern attire: the gentleman being clad in a blue coat and white trousers, and the lady in a deep red pelisse with a parasol of the same: were approaching the meal with hungry eyes, up a serpentine gravel path leading thereunto. A decidedly indelicate young gentleman, in a pair of wings, and nothing else, was depicted as superintending the cooking; a representation of the spire of the church in Langham Place, appeared in the distance; and the whole formed a "valentine," of which, as a written inscription in the window testified, there was a large assortment within, which the shopkeeper pledged himself to dispose of, to his countrymen generally, at the reduced rate of one and sixpence each.

"I should ha' forgot it; I should certainly ha' forgot it!" said Sam; So saying, he at once stepped into the

stationer's shop, and requested to be served with a sheet of the best gilt-edged letter-paper, and a hard-nibbed pen which could be warranted not to splutter. These articles having been promptly supplied, he walked on direct towards Leadenhall Market at a good round pace, very different from his recent lingering one. Looking round him, he there beheld a sign-board on which the painter's art had delineated something remotely resembling a cerulean elephant with an aquiline nose in lieu of trunk. Rightly conjecturing that this was the Blue Boar himself, he stepped into the house, and inquired concerning his parent.

"He won't be here this three quarters of an hour or more," said the young lady who superintended the domestic arrangements of the Blue Boar.

"Wery good, my dear," replied Sam. "Let me have nine penn'orth o' brandy and water luke, and the inkstand, will you, miss?"

The brandy and water luke, and the inkstand, having been carried into the little parlor, and the young lady having carefully flattened down the coals to prevent their blazing, and carried away the poker to preclude the possibility of the fire being stirred, without the full privity and concurrence of the Blue Boar being first had and obtained, Sam Weller sat himself down in a box near the stove, and pulled out the sheet of gilt-edged letter-paper, and the hard-nibbed pen. Then, looking carefully at the pen to see that there were no hairs in it, and dusting down the table, so that there might be no crumbs of bread under the paper, Sam tucked up the cuffs of his coat, squared his elbows, and composed himself to write.

To ladies and gentlemen who are not in the habit of devoting themselves practically to the science of penman-

ship, writing a letter is no very easy task; it being always considered necessary in such cases for the writer to recline his head on his left arm, so as to place his eyes as nearly as possible on a level with the paper, and while glancing sideways at the letters he is constructing, to form with his tongue imaginary characters to correspond. These motions, although unquestionably of the greatest assistance to original composition, retard in some degree the progress of the writer; and Sam had unconsciously been a full hour and a half writing words in small text, smearing out wrong letters with his little finger, and putting in new ones which required going over very often to render them visible through the old blots, when he was roused by the opening of the door and the entrance of his parent.

"Vell, Sammy," said the father.

"Vell, my Prooshan Blue," responded the son, laying down his pen. "What's the last bulletin about mother-in-law?"

"Mrs. Veller passed a wery good night, but is uncommon perwerse, and unpleasant this mornin'. Signed upon oath, S. Veller, Esquire, Senior. That's the last vun as was issued, Sammy," replied Mr. Weller, untying his shawl.

"No better yet?" inquired Sam.

"All the symptons aggerawated," replied Mr. Weller, shaking his head. "But wot's that, you're a-doin' of — pursuit of knowledge under difficulties — eh Sammy?"

"I've done now," said Sam with slight embarrassment; "I've been a-writin'."

"So I see," replied Mr. Weller. "Not to any young ooman, I hope, Sammy."

"Why it's no use a-sayin' it a'n't," replied Sam, "It's a walentine."

"A what!" exclaimed Mr. Weller, apparently horror-stricken by the word.

"A walentine," replied Sam.

"Samivel, Samivel," said Mr. Weller, in reproachful accents, "I didn't think you'd ha' done it. Arter the warnin' you've had o' your father's wicious propensities; arter all I've said to you upon this here wery subject; arter actiwally seein' and bein' in the company o' your own mother-in-law, vich I should ha' thought wos a moral lesson as no man could never ha' forgotten to his dyin' day! I didn't think you'd ha' done it, Sammy, I didn't think you'd ha' done it!" These reflections were too much for the good old man. He raised Sam's tumbler to his lips and drank off its contents.

"Wot's the matter now!" said Sam.

"Nev'r mind, Sammy," replied Mr. Weller, "it'll be a wery agonizin' trial to me at my time of life, but I'm pretty tough, that's vun consolation, as the wery old turkey remarked wen the farmer said he was afeer'd he should be obliged to kill him for the London market."

"Wot'll be a trial?" inquired Sam.

"To see you married, Sammy — to see you a deluded wictim, and thinkin' in your innocence that it's all wery capital," replied Mr. Weller. "It's a dreadful trial to a father's feelin's, that 'ere, Sammy."

"Nonsense," said Sam. "I a'n't a-goin' to get married, don't fret yourself about that; I know you're a judge o' these things. Order in your pipe, and I'll read you the letter — there."

We cannot distinctly say whether it was the prospect of the pipe, or the consolatory reflection that a fatal disposition to get married ran in the family and couldn't be helped, which calmed Mr. Weller's feelings, and caused

his grief to subside. We should be rather disposed to say that the result was attained by combining the two sources of consolation, for he repeated the second in a low tone, very frequently; ringing the bell meanwhile, to order in the first. He then divested himself of his upper coat; and lighting the pipe and placing himself in front of the fire with his back towards it, so that he could feel its full heat, and recline against the mantel-piece at the same time, turned towards Sam, and, with a countenance greatly mollified by the softening influence of tobacco, requested him to "fire away."

Sam dipped his pen into the ink to be ready for any corrections, and began with a very theatrical air:

"'Lovely'"——

"Stop," said Mr. Weller, ringing the bell. "A double glass o' the inwariable, my dear."

"Very well, sir," replied the girl; who with great quickness appeared, vanished, returned, and disappeared.

"They seem to know your ways here," observed Sam.

"Yes," replied his father, "I've been here before, in my time. Go on, Sammy."

"'Lovely creetur,'" repeated Sam.

"'Ta'n't in poetry, is it?" interposed his father.

"No no," replied Sam.

"Wery glad to hear it," said Mr. Weller. "Poetry's unnat'ral; no man ever talked poetry 'cept a beadle on boxin' day, or Warren's blackin' or Rowland's oil, or some o' them low fellows; never you let yourself down to talk poetry, my boy. Begin ag'in, Sammy."

Mr. Weller resumed his pipe with critical solemnity, and Sam once more commenced, and read as follows.

"'Lovely creetur i feel myself a dammed'"——

"That a'n't proper," said Mr. Weller, taking his pipe from his mouth.

"No; it a'n't 'dammed,'" observed Sam, holding the letter up to the light, "it's 'shamed,'" there's a blot there — 'I feel myself ashamed.'"

"Wery good," said Mr. Weller. "Go on."

"'Feel myself ashamed, and completely cir'——I forget what this here word is," said Sam, scratching his head with the pen, in vain attempts to remember.

"Why don't you look at it, then?" inquired Mr. Weller.

"So I *am* a-lookin' at it," replied Sam, "but there's another blot. Here's a 'c,' and a 'i,' and a 'd.'"

"Circumwented, p'r'aps," suggested Mr. Weller.

"No it a'n't that," said Sam; "circumscribed; that's it."

"That a'n't as good a word as circumwented, Sammy," said Mr. Weller gravely.

"Think not?" said Sam.

"Nothin' like it," replied his father.

"But don't you think it means more?" inquired Sam.

"Vell p'raps it is a more tenderer word," said Mr. Weller, after a few moments' reflection. "Go on, Sammy."

"'Feel myself ashamed and completely circumscribed in a dressin' of you, for you *are* a nice gal and nothin' but it.'"

"That's a wery pretty sentiment," said the elder Mr. Weller, removing his pipe to make way for the remark.

"Yes, I think it is rayther good," observed Sam, highly flattered.

"Wot I like in that 'ere style of writin'," said the elder Mr. Weller, "is, that there a'n't no callin' names in it, — no Wenuses, nor nothin' o' that kind. Wot's the good o' callin' a young 'ooman a Wenus or a angel, Sammy?"

"Ah! what, indeed?" replied Sam.

"You might jist as well call her a griffin, or a unicorn, or a king's arms at once, which is wery well known to be a collection o' fabulous animals," added Mr. Weller.

"Just as well," replied Sam.

"Drive on, Sammy," said Mr. Weller.

Sam complied with the request, and proceeded as follows; his father continuing to smoke, with a mixed expression of wisdom and complacency, which was particularly edifying.

"'Afore I see you I thought all women was alike.'"

"So they are," observed the elder Mr. Weller, parenthetically.

"'But now,'" continued Sam, "'now I find what a reg'lar soft-headed, inkred'lous turnip I must ha' been; for there a'n't nobody like you though *I* like you better than nothin' at all.' I thought it best to make that rayther strong," said Sam, looking up.

Mr. Weller nodded approvingly, and Sam resumed.

"'So I take the privilidge of the day, Mary, my dear — as the gen'l'm'n in difficulties did, ven he valked out of a Sunday — to tell you that the first and only time I see you, your likeness was took on my h'art in much quicker time and brighter colors than ever a likeness was took by the profeel macheen (wich p'raps you may have heerd on Mary my dear) altho' it *does* finish a portrait and put the frame and glass on complete with a hook at the end to hang it up by and all in two minutes and a quarter.'"

"I am afeered that werges on the poetical, Sammy," said Mr. Weller, dubiously.

"No it don't," replied Sam, reading on very quickly, to avoid contesting the point —

"'Except of me Mary my dear as your walentine and think over what I've said. — My dear Mary I will now conclude.' That's all," said Sam.

"That's raythe a sudden pull up, a'n't it, Sammy?" inquired Mr. Weller.

"Not a bit on it," said Sam; "she'll vish there wos more, and that's the great art o' letter-writin'."

"Well," said Mr. Weller, "there's somethin' in that; and I wish your mother-in-law 'ud only conduct her conwersation on the same gen-teel principle. A'n't you agoin' to sign it?"

"That's the difficulty," said Sam; "I don't know what *to* sign it."

"Sign it, Veller," said the oldest surviving proprietor of that name.

"Won't do," said Sam. "Never sign a walentine with your own name."

"Sign it 'Pickvick,' then," said Mr. Weller; "it's a wery good name, and a easy one to spell."

"The wery thing," said Sam. "I *could* end with a werse; what do you think?"

"I don't like it, Sam," rejoined Mr. Weller. "I never know'd a respectable coachman as wrote poetry, 'cept one, as made an affectin' copy o' werses the night afore he wos hung for a highway robbery; and *he* was only a Cambervell man, so even that's no rule."

But Sam was not to be dissuaded from the poetical idea that had occurred to him, so he signed the letter,

"Your love-sick
Pickwick."

And having folded it, in a very intricate manner, squeezed a down-hill direction in one corner: "To Mary, Housemaid, at Mr. Nupkins's Mayor's, Ipswich,

Suffolk;" and put it into his pocket, wafered, and ready for the General Post. This important business having been transacted, Mr. Weller the elder proceeded to open that, on which he had summoned his son.

"The first matter relates to your governor, Sammy," said Mr. Weller. "He's a-goin' to be tried to-morrow, a'n't he?"

"The trial's a-comin' on," replied Sam.

"Vell," said Mr. Weller, "now I s'pose he'll want to call some witnesses to speak to his character, or p'raps to prove a alleybi. I've been a-turnin' the bis'ness over in my mind, and he may make his-self easy, Sammy, I've got some friends as 'll do either for him, but my advice 'ud be this here — never mind the character, and stick to the alleybi. Nothing like a alleybi, Sammy, nothing." Mr. Weller looked very profound as he delivered this legal opinion; and burying his nose in his tumbler, winked over the top thereof, at his astonished son.

"Why, what do you mean?" said Sam; "you don't think he's a-going to be tried at the Old Bailey, do you?"

"That a'n't no part of the present con-sideration, Sammy," replied Mr. Weller. "Verever he's a-goin' to be tried, my boy, a alleybi's the thing to get him off. Ve got Tom Vildspark off that 'ere manslaughter, with a alleybi, ven all the big vigs to a man said as nothing couldn't save him. And my 'pinion is, Sammy, that if your governor don't prove a alleybi, he'll be what the Italians call reg'larly flummoxed, and that's all about it."

As the elder Mr. Weller entertained a firm and unalterable conviction that the Old Bailey was the supreme

court of judicature in this country, and that its rules and forms of proceeding regulated and controlled the practice of all other courts of justice whatsoever, he totally disregarded the assurances and arguments of his son, tending to show that the alibi was inadmissible; and vehemently protested that Mr. Pickwick was being "wictimized." Finding that it was of no use to discuss the matter further, Sam changed the subject, and inquired what the second topic was, on which his revered parent wished to consult him.

"That's a p'int o' domestic policy, Sammy," said Mr. Weller. "This here Stiggins"—

"Red-nosed man?" inquired Sam.

"The wery same," replied Mr. Weller. "This here red-nosed man, Sammy, wisits your mother-in-law vith a kindness and constancy as I never see equalled. He's sitch a friend o' the family, Sammy, that wen he's avay from us, he can't be comfortable unless he has somethin' to remember us by."

"And I'd give him somethin' as 'ud turpentine and bees'-vax his memory for the next ten years or so, if I wos you," interposed Sam.

"Stop a minute," said Mr. Weller; "I wos a-going to say, he always brings now, a flat bottle as holds about a pint and a half, and fills it vith the pine-apple rum afore he goes avay."

"And empties it afore he comes back, I s'pose?" said Sam.

"Clean!" replied Mr. Weller; "never leaves nothin' in it but the cork and the smell; trust him for that, Sammy. Now these here fellows, my boy, are a-goin', to-night, to get up the monthly meetin' o' the Brick Lane Branch o' the United Grand Junction Ebenezer

Temperance Association. Your mother-in-law *wos* a-goin', Sammy, but she's got the rheumatics, and can't; and I, Sammy, — I've got the two tickets as wos sent her." Mr. Weller communicated this secret with great glee, and winked so indefatigably after doing so, that Sam began to think he must have got the *tic douloureux* in his right eyelid.

"Well?" said that young gentleman.

"Well," continued his progenitor, looking round him very cautiously, "you and I'll go, punctiwal to the time. The deputy shepherd won't, Sammy; the deputy shepherd won't." Here Mr. Weller was seized with a paroxysm of chuckles, which gradually terminated in as near an approach to a choke, as an elderly gentleman can, with safety, sustain.

"Well, I never see sitch an old ghost in all my born days," exclaimed Sam, rubbing the old gentleman's back, hard enough to set him on fire with the friction. "What are you laughin' at, corpilence?"

"Hush! Sammy," said Mr. Weller, looking round him with increased caution, and speaking in a whisper: "Two friends o' mine, as works the Oxford Road, and is up to all kinds o' games, has got the deputy shepherd safe in tow, Sammy; and ven he does come to the Ebenezer Junction, (vich he's sure to do: for they'll see him to the door, and shove him in if necessary) he'll be as far gone in rum and water, as ever he wos at the Markis o' Granby, Dorkin', and that's not sayin' a little neither." And with this, Mr. Weller once more laughed immoderately, and once more relapsed into a state of partial suffocation, in consequence.

Nothing could have been more in accordance with Sam Weller's feelings, than the projected exposure of

the real propensities and qualities of the red-nosed man; and it being very near the appointed hour of meeting, the father and son took their way at once to Brick Lane: Sam not forgetting to drop his letter into a general post-office as they walked along.

The monthly meetings of the Brick Lane Branch of the United Grand Junction Ebenezer Temperance Association, were held in a large room, pleasantly and airily situated at the top of a safe and commodious ladder. The president was the straight-walking Mr. Anthony Humm, a converted fireman, now a schoolmaster, and occasionally an itinerant preacher; and the secretary was Mr. Jonas Mudge, chandler's shop-keeper, an enthusiastic and disinterested vessel, who sold tea to the members. Previous to the commencement of business, the ladies sat upon forms, and drank tea, till such time as they considered it expedient to leave off; and a large wooden money-box was conspicuously placed upon the green baize cloth of the business table, behind which the secretary stood, and acknowledged, with a gracious smile, every addition to the rich vein of copper which lay concealed within.

On this particular occasion the women drank tea to a most alarming extent; greatly to the horror of Mr. Weller senior, who, utterly regardless of all Sam's admonitory nudgings, stared about him in every direction with the most undisguised astonishment.

"Sammy," whispered Mr. Weller, "if some o' these here people don't want tappin' to-morrow mornin', I a'n't your father, and that's wot it is. Why, this here old lady next me is a-drowndin' herself in tea."

"Be quiet, can't you?" murmured Sam.

"Sam," whispered Mr. Weller, a moment afterwards,

in a tone of deep agitation, "mark my vords, my boy; if that 'ere secretary feller keeps on for only five minutes more, he'll blow himself up with toast and water."

"Well, let him, if he likes," replied Sam; "it a'n't no bis'ness o' yourn."

"If this here lasts much longer, Sammy," said Mr. Weller, in the same low voice, "I shall feel it my duty, as a human bein', to rise and address the cheer. There's a young 'ooman on the next form but two, as has drank nine breakfast cups and a half; and she's a-swellin' wisibly before my wery eyes."

There is little doubt that Mr. Weller would have carried his benevolent intention into immediate execution, if a great noise, occasioned by putting up the cups and saucers, had not very fortunately announced that the tea-drinking was over. The crockery having been removed, the table with the green baize cover was carried out into the centre of the room, and the business of the evening was commenced by a little emphatic man, with a bald head, and drab shorts, who suddenly rushed up the ladder, at the imminent peril of snapping the two little legs encased in the drab shorts, and said:

"Ladies and gentlemen, I move our excellent brother, Mr. Anthony Humm, into the chair."

The ladies waved a choice collection of pocket-handkerchiefs at this proposition; and the impetuous little man literally moved Mr. Humm into the chair, by taking him by the shoulders and thrusting him into a mahogany frame which had once represented that article of furniture. The waving of handkerchiefs was renewed; and Mr. Humm, who was a sleek, white-faced man, in a perpetual perspiration, bowed meekly, to the great admiration of the females, and formally took his

seat. Silence was then proclaimed by the little man in the drab shorts, and Mr. Humm rose and said — That, with the permission of his Brick Lane Branch brothers and sisters, then and there present, the secretary would read the report of the Brick Lane Branch committee; a proposition which was again received with a demonstration of pocket-handkerchiefs.

The secretary having sneezed in a very impressive manner, and the cough which always seizes an assembly, when anything particular is going to be done, having been duly performed, the following document was read:

"REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE BRICK LANE BRANCH OF THE UNITED GRAND JUNCTION EBENEZER TEMPERANCE ASSOCIATION.

"Your committee have pursued their grateful labors during the past month, and have the unspeakable pleasure of reporting the following additional cases of converts to Temperance.

"H. Walker, tailor, wife, and two children. When in better circumstances, owns to having been in the constant habit of drinking ale and beer; says he is not certain whether he did not twice a week, for twenty years, taste, 'dog's nose,' which your committee find upon inquiry, to be compounded of warm porter, moist sugar, gin, and nutmeg (a groan, and 'So it is!' from an elderly female). Is now out of work and pennyless; thinks it must be the porter (cheers) or the loss of the use of his right hand; is not certain which, but thinks it very likely that, if he had drank nothing but water all his life, his fellow workman would never have stuck a rusty needle in him, and thereby occasioned his accident

(tremendous cheering). Has nothing but cold water to drink, and never feels thirsty (great applause).

"Betsy Martin, widow, one child, and one eye. Goes out charing and washing, by the day; never had more than one eye, but knows her mother drank bottled stout, and shouldn't wonder if that caused it (immense cheering). Thinks it not impossible that if she had always abstained from spirits, she might have had two eyes by this time (tremendous applause). Used, at every place she went to, to have eighteen pence a day, a pint of porter, and a glass of spirits; but since she became a member of the Brick Lane Branch, has always demanded three and sixpence instead (the announcement of this most interesting fact was received with deafening enthusiasm).

"Henry Beller was for many years toast-master at various corporation dinners, during which time he drank a great deal of foreign wine; may sometimes have carried a bottle or two home with him; is not quite certain of that, but is sure if he did, that he drank the contents. Feels very low and melancholy, is very feverish, and has a constant thirst upon him; thinks it must be the wine he used to drink (cheers). Is out of employ now; and never touches a drop of foreign wine by any chance (tremendous plaudits).

"Thomas Burton is purveyor of cat's-meat to the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs, and several members of the Common Council (the announcement of this gentleman's name was received with breathless interest). Has a wooden leg; finds a wooden leg expensive, going over the stones; used to wear second-hand wooden legs, and drink a glass of hot gin and water regularly every night — sometimes two (deep sighs). Found the second-hand

wooden legs split and rot very quickly; is firmly persuaded that their constitution was undermined by the gin and water (prolonged cheering). Buys new wooden legs now, and drinks nothing but water and weak tea. The new legs last twice as long as the others used to do, and he attributes this solely to his temperate habits (triumphant cheers)."

Anthony Humm now moved that the assembly do regale itself with a song. With a view to their rational and moral enjoyment, brother Mordlin had adapted the beautiful words of "Who hasn't heard of a Jolly Young Waterman?" to the tune of the Old Hundredth, which he would request them to join him in singing (great applause). He might take that opportunity of expressing his firm persuasion that the late Mr. Dibdin, seeing the errors of his former life, had written that song to show the advantages of abstinence. It was a Temperance song (whirlwinds of cheers.) The neatness of the interesting young man's attire, the dexterity of his feathering, the enviable state of mind which enabled him, in the beautiful words of the poet, to

"Row along, thinking of nothing at all,"

all combined to prove that he must have been a water-drinker (cheers). Oh, what a state of virtuous jollity! (rapturous cheering.) And what was the young man's reward? Let all young men present mark this:

"The maidens all flock'd to his boat so readily."

(Loud cheers, in which the ladies joined.) What a bright example! The sisterhood, the maidens, flocking round the young waterman, and urging him along the stream of duty and of temperance. But, was it the

maidens of humble life only, who soothed, consoled, and supported him? No!

"He was always first oars with the fine city ladies."

(Immense cheering.) The soft sex to a man — he begged pardon, to a female — rallied round the young waterman, and turned with disgust from the drinker of spirits (cheers). The Brick Lane Branch brothers were watermen (cheers and laughter). That room was their boat; that audience were the maidens; and he (Mr. Anthony Humm), however unworthily, was "first oars" (unbounded applause).

"Wot does he mean by the soft sex, Sammy?" inquired Mr. Weller, in a whisper.

"The womin," said Sam, in the same tone.

"He a'n't far out there, Sammy," replied Mr. Weller; "they *must* be a soft sex, — a wery soft sex, indeed — if they let themselves be gammoned by such fellers as him."

Any further observations from the indignant old gentleman were cut short by the commencement of the song, which Mr. Anthony Humm gave out, two lines at a time, for the information of such of his hearers as were unacquainted with the legend. While it was being sung, the little man with the drab shorts disappeared; he returned immediately on its conclusion, and whispered to Mr. Anthony Humm, with a face of the deepest importance.

"My friends," said Mr. Humm, holding up his hand in a deprecatory manner, to bespeak the silence of such of the stout old ladies as were yet a line or two behind; "my friends, a delegate from the Dorking branch of our society, Brother Stiggins, attends below."

Out came the pocket-handkerchiefs again, in greater

force than ever; for Mr. Stiggins was excessively popular among the female constituency of Brick Lane.

"He may approach, I think," said Mr. Humm, looking round him, with a fat smile. "Brother Tadger, let him come forth and greet us."

The little man in the drab shorts who answered to the name of Brother Tadger, bustled down the ladder with great speed, and was immediately afterwards heard tumbling up with the reverend Mr. Stiggins.

"He's a-comin', Sammy," whispered Mr. Weller, purple in the countenance with suppressed laughter.

"Don't say nothin' to me," replied Sam, "for I can't bear it. He's close to the door. I hear him a-knockin' his head again' the lath and plaster now."

As Sam Weller spoke, the little door flew open, and brother Tadger appeared, closely followed by the reverend Mr. Stiggins, who no sooner entered, than there was a great clapping of hands, and stamping of feet, and flourishing of handkerchiefs; to all of which manifestations of delight, Brother Stiggins returned no other acknowledgment than staring with a wild eye, and a fixed smile, at the extreme top of the wick of the candle on the table: swaying his body to and fro, meanwhile, in a very unsteady and uncertain manner.

"Are you unwell, brother Stiggins?" whispered Mr. Anthony Humm.

"I am all right, sir," replied Mr. Stiggins, in a tone in which ferocity was blended with an extreme thickness of utterance; "I am all right, sir."

"Oh, very well," rejoined Mr. Anthony Humm, retreating a few paces.

"I believe no man here, has ventured to say that I am *not* all right, sir?" said Mr. Stiggins.

"Oh, certainly not," said Mr. Humm.

"I should advise him not to, sir; I should advise him not," said Mr. Stiggins.

By this time the audience were perfectly silent, and waited with some anxiety for the resumption of business.

"Will you address the meeting, brother?" said Mr. Humm, with a smile of invitation.

"No, sir," rejoined Mr. Stiggins; "No, sir. I will not, sir."

The meeting looked at each other with raised eyelids; and a murmur of astonishment ran through the room.

"It's my opinion, sir," said Mr. Stiggins, unbuttoning his coat, and speaking very loudly; "it's my opinion, sir, that this meeting is drunk, sir. Brother Tadger, sir!" said Mr. Stiggins, suddenly increasing in ferocity, and turning sharp round on the little man in the drab shorts, "*you* are drunk, sir!" With this, Mr. Stiggins, entertaining a praiseworthy desire to promote the sobriety of the meeting, and to exclude therefrom all improper characters, hit brother Tadger on the summit of the nose with such unerring aim, that the drab shorts disappeared like a flash of lightning. Brother Tadger had been knocked, head first, down the ladder.

Upon this, the women set up a loud and dismal screaming; and rushing in small parties before their favorite brothers, flung their arms around them to preserve them from danger. An instance of affection, which had nearly proved fatal to Humm, who, being extremely popular, was all but suffocated, by the crowd of female devotees that hung about his neck, and heaped caresses upon him. The greater part of the lights were quickly put out, and nothing but noise and confusion resounded on all sides.

"Now Sammy," said Mr. Weller, taking off his great coat with much deliberation, "just you step out, and fetch in a watchman."

"And wot are you a-goin' to do, the while?" inquired Sam.

"Never you mind me, Sammy," replied the old gentleman; "I shall ockipy myself in havin' a small settlement with that 'ere Stiggins." Before Sam could interfere to prevent it, his heroic parent had penetrated into a remote corner of the room, and attacked the reverend Mr. Stiggins with manual dexterity.

"Come off!" said Sam.

"Come on!" cried Mr. Weller; and without further invitation he gave the reverend Mr. Stiggins a preliminary tap on the head, and began dancing round him in a buoyant and cork-like manner, which in a gentleman at his time of life was a perfect marvel to behold.

Finding all remonstrances unavailing, Sam pulled his hat firmly on, threw his father's coat over his arm, and taking the old man round the waist, forcibly dragged him down the ladder, and into the street; never releasing his hold, nor permitting him to stop, until they reached the corner. As they gained it, they could hear the shouts of the populace, who were witnessing the removal of the reverend Mr. Stiggins to strong lodgings for the night: and could hear the noise occasioned by the dispersion in various directions of the Members of the Brick Lane Branch of the United Grand Junction Ebenezer Temperance Association.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

IS WHOLLY DEVOTED TO A FULL AND FAITHFUL REPORT OF THE MEMORABLE TRIAL OF BARDELL AGAINST PICKWICK.

"I WONDER what the foreman of the jury, whoever he'll be, has got for breakfast," said Mr. Snodgrass, by way of keeping up a conversation on the eventful morning of the fourteenth of February.

"Ah!" said Perker, "I hope he's got a good one."

"Why so?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Highly important; very important, my dear sir," replied Perker. A good, contented, well-breakfasted juryman, is a capital thing to get hold of. Discontented or hungry jurymen, my dear sir, always find for the plaintiff."

"Bless my heart," said Mr. Pickwick, looking very blank; "what do they do that for?"

"Why, I don't know," replied the little man, coolly; "saves time, I suppose. If it's near dinner-time, the foreman takes out his watch when the jury have retired, and says, 'Dear me, gentlemen, ten minutes to five, I declare! I dine at five, gentlemen.' 'So do I,' says everybody else, except two men who ought to have dined at three, and seem more than half disposed to stand out in consequence. The foreman smiles, and puts up his

watch: — 'Well, gentlemen, what do we say? plaintiff or defendant, gentlemen? I rather think, so far as I am concerned, gentleman, — I say, I rather think, — but don't let that influence you — I *rather* think the plaintiff's the man.' Upon this, two or three other men are sure to say that they think so too — as of course they do; and then they get on very unanimously and comfortably. Ten minutes past nine!" said the little man, looking at his watch. "Time we were off, my dear sir; breach of promise trial — court is generally full in such cases. You had better ring for a coach, my dear sir, or we shall be rather late."

Mr. Pickwick immediately rang the bell; and a coach having been procured, the four Pickwickians and Mr. Perker ensconced themselves therein, and drove to Guildhall; Sam Weller, Mr. Lowten, and the blue bag, following in a cab.

"Lowten," said Perker, when they reached the outer hall of the court, "put Mr. Pickwick's friends in the students' box; Mr. Pickwick himself had better sit by me. This way, my dear sir, this way." Taking Mr. Pickwick by the coat-sleeve, the little man led him to the low seat just beneath the desks of the King's Counsel, which is constructed for the convenience of attorneys, who from that spot can whisper into the ear of the leading counsel in the case, any instructions that may be necessary during the progress of the trial. The occupants of this seat are invisible to the great body of spectators, inasmuch as they sit on a much lower level than either the barristers or the audience, whose seats are raised above the floor. Of course they have their backs to both, and their faces towards the judge.

"That's the witness-box, I suppose?" said Mr. Pick-

wick, pointing to a kind of pulpit, with a brass rail, on his left hand.

"That's the witness-box, my dear sir," replied Perker, disinterring a quantity of papers from the blue bag, which Lowten had just deposited at his feet.

"And that," said Mr. Pickwick, pointing to a couple of enclosed seats on his right, "that's where the jurymen sit, is it not?"

"The identical place, my dear sir," replied Perker, tapping the lid of his snuff-box.

Mr. Pickwick stood up in a state of great agitation, and took a glance at the court. There were already a pretty large sprinkling of spectators in the gallery, and a numerous muster of gentlemen in wigs, in the barristers' seats: who presented, as a body, all that pleasing and extensive variety of nose and whisker for which the bar of England is so justly celebrated. Such of the gentlemen as had a brief to carry, carried it in as conspicuous a manner as possible, and occasionally scratched their noses therewith, to impress the fact more strongly on the observation of the spectators. Other gentlemen, who had no briefs to show, carried under their arms goodly octavos, with a red label behind, and that under-done-pie-crust-colored cover, which is technically known as "law calf." Others, who had neither briefs nor books, thrust their hands into their pockets, and looked as wise as they conveniently could; others, again, moved here and there with great restlessness and earnestness of manner, content to awaken thereby the admiration and astonishment of the uninitiated strangers. The whole, to the great wonderment of Mr. Pickwick, were divided into little groups, who were chatting and discussing the news of the day in the most unfeeling manner possible, — just as if no trial at all were coming on.

A bow from Mr. Phunky, as he entered, and took his seat behind the row appropriated to the King's Counsel, attracted Mr. Pickwick's attention; and he had scarcely returned it, when Mr. Sergeant Snubbin appeared, followed by Mr. Mallard, who half hid the Sergeant behind a large crimson bag, which he placed on his table, and, after shaking hands with Perker, withdrew. Then there entered two or three more Sergeants: and among them, one with a fat body and a red face, who nodded in a friendly manner to Mr. Sergeant Snubbin, and said it was a fine morning.

"Who's that red-faced man, who said it was a fine morning, and nodded to our counsel?" whispered Mr. Pickwick.

"Mr. Sergeant Buzfuz," replied Perker. "He's opposed to us; he leads on the other side. That gentleman behind him is Mr. Skimpin, his junior."

Mr. Pickwick was on the point of inquiring, with great abhorrence of the man's cold-blooded villany, how Mr. Sergeant Buzfuz, who was counsel for the opposite party, dared to presume to tell Mr. Sergeant Snubbin, who was counsel for him, that it was a fine morning, when he was interrupted by a general rising of the barristers, and a loud cry of "Silence!" from the officers of the court. Looking round, he found that this was caused by the entrance of the judge.

Mr. Justice Stareleigh (who sat in the absence of the Chief Justice, occasioned by indisposition), was a most particularly short man, and so fat, that he seemed all face and waistcoat. He rolled in, upon two little turned legs, and having bobbed gravely to the bar, who bobbed gravely to him, put his little legs underneath his table, and his little three-cornered hat upon it; and when Mr.

Justice Stareleigh had done this, all you could see of him was two queer little eyes, one broad pink face, and somewhere about half of a big and very comical-looking wig.

The judge had no sooner taken his seat, than the officer on the floor of the court called out "Silence!" in a commanding tone, upon which another officer in the gallery cried "Silence!" in an angry manner, whereupon three or four more ushers shouted "Silence!" in a voice of indignant remonstrance. This being done, a gentleman in black, who sat below the judge, proceeded to call over the names of the jury; and, after a great deal of bawling, it was discovered that only ten special jurymen were present. Upon this, Mr. Sergeant Buzfuz prayed a *tales;* the gentleman in black then proceeded to press into the special jury, two of the common jurymen; and a green-grocer and a chemist were caught directly.

"Answer to your names, gentlemen, that you may be sworn," said the gentleman in black. "Richard Upwitch."

"Here," said the green-grocer.

"Thomas Groffin."

"Here," said the chemist.

"Take the book, gentlemen. You shall well and truly try" —

"I beg this court's pardon," said the chemist, who was a tall, thin, yellow-visaged man, "but I hope this court will excuse my attendance."

"On what grounds, sir?" said Mr. Justice Stareleigh.

"I have no assistant, my Lord," said the chemist.

"I can't help that, sir," replied Mr. Justice Stareleigh. "You should hire one."

"I can't afford it, my Lord," rejoined the chemist.

"Then you ought to be able to afford it, sir," said the judge, reddening; for Mr. Justice Stareleigh's temper bordered on the irritable, and brooked not contradiction.

"I know I *ought* to do, if I got on as well as I deserved, but I don't, my Lord," answered the chemist.

"Swear the gentleman," said the judge, peremptorily.

The officer had got no further than the "You shall well and truly try," when he was again interrupted by the chemist.

"I am to be sworn, my Lord, am I?" said the chemist.

"Certainly, sir," replied the testy little judge.

"Very well, my Lord," replied the chemist, in a resigned manner. "Then there'll be murder before this trial's over; that's all. Swear me, if you please, sir;" and sworn the chemist was, before the judge could find words to utter.

"I merely wanted to observe, my Lord," said the chemist, taking his seat with great deliberation, "that I've left nobody but an errand-boy in my shop. He is a very nice boy, my Lord, but he is not acquainted with drugs; and I know that the prevailing impression on his mind is, that Epsom salts means oxalic acid; and syrup of senna, laudanum. That's all, my Lord." With this, the tall chemist composed himself into a comfortable attitude, and, assuming a pleasant expression of countenance, appeared to have prepared himself for the worst.

Mr. Pickwick was regarding the chemist with feelings of the deepest horror, when a slight sensation was perceptible in the body of the court; and immediately afterwards Mrs. Bardell, supported by Mrs. Cluppins, was

led in, and placed, in a drooping state, at the other end of the seat on which Mr. Pickwick sat. An extra-sized umbrella was then handed in by Mr. Dodson, and a pair of pattens by Mr. Fogg, each of whom had prepared a most sympathizing and melancholy face for the occasion. Mrs. Sanders then appeared, leading in Master Bardell. At sight of her child, Mrs. Bardell started; suddenly recollecting herself, she kissed him in a frantic manner; then relapsing into a state of hysterical imbecility, the good lady requested to be informed where she was. In reply to this, Mrs. Cluppins and Mrs. Sanders turned their heads away and wept, while Messrs. Dodson and Fogg entreated the plaintiff to compose herself. Sergeant Buzfuz rubbed his eyes very hard with a large white handkerchief, and gave an appealing look towards the jury, while the judge was visibly affected, and several of the beholders tried to cough down their emotions.

"Very good notion that, indeed," whispered Perker to Mr. Pickwick. "Capital fellows those Dodson and Fogg; excellent ideas of effect, my dear sir, excellent."

As Perker spoke, Mrs. Bardell began to recover by slow degrees, while Mrs. Cluppins, after a careful survey of Master Bardell's buttons and the button-holes to which they severally belonged, placed him on the floor of the court in front of his mother, — a commanding position in which he could not fail to awaken the full commiseration and sympathy of both judge and jury. This was not done without considerable opposition, and many tears, on the part of the young gentleman himself, who had certain inward misgivings that the placing him within the full glare of the judge's eye was only a formal prel-

ude to his being immediately ordered away for instant execution, or for transportation beyond the seas, during the whole term of his natural life, at the very least.

"Bardell and Pickwick," cried the gentleman in black, calling on the case, which stood first on the list.

"I am for the plaintiff, my Lord," said Mr. Sergeant Buzfuz.

"Who is with you, brother Buzfuz?" said the judge. Mr. Skimpin bowed, to intimate that he was.

"I appear for the defendant, my Lord," said Mr. Sergeant Snubbin.

"Anybody with you, brother Snubbin?" inquired the court.

"Mr. Phunky, my Lord," replied Sergeant Snubbin.

"Sergeant Buzfuz and Mr. Skimpin for the plaintiff," said the judge, writing down the names in his note-book and reading as he wrote; "for the defendant, Sergeant Snubbin and Mr. Monkey."

"Beg your Lordship's pardon, Phunky."

"Oh, very good," said the judge; "I never had the pleasure of hearing the gentleman's name before." Here Mr. Phunky bowed and smiled, and the judge bowed and smiled too, and then Mr. Phunky, blushing into the very whites of his eyes, tried to look as if he didn't know that everybody was gazing at him: a thing which no man ever succeeded in doing yet, or in all reasonable probability, ever will.

"Go on," said the judge.

The ushers again called silence, and Mr. Skimpin proceeded to "open the case;" and the case appeared to have very little inside it when he had opened it, for he kept such particulars as he knew, completely to himself, and sat down, after a lapse of three minutes, leaving the

jury in precisely the same advanced stage of wisdom as they were in before.

Sergeant Buzfuz then rose with all the majesty and dignity which the grave nature of the proceedings demanded, and having whispered to Dodson, and conferred briefly with Fogg, pulled his gown over his shoulders, settled his wig, and addressed the jury.

Sergeant Buzfuz began by saying, that never, in the whole course of his professional experience — never, from the very first moment of his applying himself to the study and practice of the law — had he approached a case with feelings of such deep emotion, or with such a heavy sense of the responsibility imposed upon him — a responsibility, he would say, which he could never have supported, were he not buoyed up and sustained by a conviction so strong, that it amounted to positive certainty that the cause of truth and justice, or, in other words, the cause of his much-injured and most oppressed client, must prevail with the high-minded and intelligent dozen of men whom he now saw in that box before him.

Counsel always begin in this way, because it puts the jury on the very best terms with themselves, and makes them think what sharp fellows they must be. A visible effect was produced immediately; several jurymen beginning to take voluminous notes with the utmost eagerness.

"You have heard from my learned friend, gentlemen," continued Sergeant Buzfuz, well knowing that, from the learned friend alluded to, the gentlemen of the jury had heard just nothing at all — "you have heard from my learned friend, gentlemen, that this is an action for a breach of promise of marriage, in which the damages are laid at 1500*l.* But you have not heard from my

learned friend, inasmuch as it did not come within my learned friend's province to tell you, what are the facts and circumstances of the case. Those facts and circumstances, gentlemen, you shall hear detailed by me, and proved by the unimpeachable female whom I will place in that box before you."

Here Mr. Sergeant Buzfuz, with a tremendous emphasis on the word "box," smote his table with a mighty sound, and glanced at Dodson and Fogg, who nodded admiration of the sergeant, and indignant defiance of the defendant.

"The plaintiff, gentlemen," continued Sergeant Buzfuz, in a soft and melancholy voice, "the plaintiff is a widow; yes, gentlemen, a widow. The late Mr. Bardell, after enjoying, for many years, the esteem and confidence of his sovereign, as one of the guardians of his royal revenues, glided almost imperceptibly from the world, to seek elsewhere for that repose and peace which a custom-house can never afford."

At this pathetic description of the decease of Mr. Bardell, who had been knocked on the head with a quart-pot in a public-house cellar, the learned sergeant's voice faltered, and he proceeded with emotion:

"Some time before his death, he had stamped his likeness upon a little boy. With this little boy, the only pledge of her departed exciseman, Mrs. Bardell shrunk from the world, and courted the retirement and tranquillity of Goswell Street; and here she placed in her front parlor-window a written placard, bearing this inscription — 'Apartments furnished for a single gentleman. Inquire within.'" Here Sergeant Buzfuz paused, while several gentlemen of the jury took a note of the document.

"There is no date to that, is there, sir?" inquired a juror.

"There is no date, gentlemen," replied Sergeant Buzfuz; "but I am instructed to say that it was put in the plaintiff's parlor-window just this time three years. I entreat the attention of the jury to the wording of this document — 'Apartments furnished for a single gentleman!' Mrs. Bardell's opinions of the opposite sex, gentlemen, were derived from a long contemplation of the inestimable qualities of her lost husband. She had no fear — she had no distrust — she had no suspicion — all was confidence and reliance. 'Mr. Bardell,' said the widow; 'Mr. Bardell was a man of honor — Mr. Bardell was a man of his word — Mr. Bardell was no deceiver — Mr. Bardell was once a single gentleman himself; *to* single gentlemen I look for protection, for assistance, for comfort, and for consolation — *in* single gentlemen I shall perpetually see something to remind me of what Mr. Bardell was, when he first won my young and untried affections; to a single gentleman, then, shall my lodgings be let.' Actuated by this beautiful and touching impulse, (among the best impulses of our imperfect nature, gentlemen,) the lonely and desolate widow dried her tears, furnished her first floor, caught her innocent boy to her maternal bosom, and put the bill up in her parlor-window. Did it remain there long? No. The serpent was on the watch, the train was laid, the mine was preparing, the sapper and miner was at work. Before the bill had been in the parlor-window three days — three days, gentlemen — a Being, erect upon two legs, and bearing all the outward semblance of a man, and not of a monster, knocked at the door of Mrs. Bardell's house. He inquired within; he took the lodgings; and

on the very next day he entered into possession of them. This man was Pickwick — Pickwick the defendant."

Sergeant Buzfuz, who had proceeded with such volubility that his face was perfectly crimson, here paused for breath. The silence awoke Mr. Justice Stareleigh, who immediately wrote down something with a pen without any ink in it, and looked unusually profound, to impress the jury with the belief that he always thought most deeply with his eyes shut. Sergeant Buzfuz proceeded.

"Of this man Pickwick I will say little; the subject presents but few attractions; and I, gentlemen, am not the man, nor are you, gentlemen, the men, to delight in the contemplation of revolting heartlessness, and of systematic villany."

Here Mr. Pickwick, who had been writhing in silence for some time, gave a violent start, as if some vague idea of assaulting Sergeant Buzfuz, in the august presence of justice and law, suggested itself to his mind. An admonitory gesture from Perker restrained him, and he listened to the learned gentleman's continuation with a look of indignation, which contrasted forcibly with the admiring faces of Mrs. Cluppins and Mrs. Sanders.

"I say systematic villany, gentlemen," said Sergeant Buzfuz, looking through Mr. Pickwick, and talking *at* him; "and when I say systematic villany, let me tell the defendant Pickwick if he be in court, as I am informed he is, that it would have been more decent in him, more becoming, in better judgment, and in better taste, if he had stopped away. Let me tell him, gentlemen, that any gestures of dissent or disapprobation in which he may indulge in this court will not go down with you; that you will know how to value and how to appreciate them; and let me tell him further, as my lord

will tell you, gentlemen, that a counsel, in the discharge of his duty to his client, is neither to be intimidated nor bullied, nor put down; and that any attempt to do either the one or the other, or the first, or the last, will recoil on the head of the attempter, be he plaintiff or be he defendant, be his name Pickwick, or Noakes, or Stoakes, or Stiles, or Brown, or Thompson."

This little divergence from the subject in hand, had of course the intended effect of turning all eyes to Mr. Pickwick. Sergeant Buzfuz, having partially recovered from the state of moral elevation into which he had lashed himself, resumed:

"I shall show you, gentlemen, that for two years Pickwick continued to reside constantly, and without interruption or intermission, at Mrs. Bardell's house. I shall show you that Mrs. Bardell, during the whole of that time, waited on him, attended to his comforts, cooked his meals, looked out his linen for the washerwoman when it went abroad, darned, aired, and prepared it for wear, when it came home, and, in short, enjoyed his fullest trust and confidence. I shall show you that, on many occasions, he gave halfpence, and on some occasions even sixpences, to her little boy; and I shall prove to you, by a witness whose testimony it will be impossible for my learned friend to weaken or controvert, that on one occasion he patted the boy on the head, and, after inquiring whether he had won any *alley tors* or *commoneys* lately (both of which I understand to be a particular species of marbles much prized by the youth of this town), made use of this remarkable expression — 'How should you like to have another father?' I shall prove to you, gentlemen, that about a year ago, Pickwick suddenly began to absent himself from home, during long inter-

vals, as if with the intention of gradually breaking off from my client; but I shall show you also, that his resolution was not at that time sufficiently strong, or that his better feelings conquered, if better feelings he has, or that the charms and accomplishments of my client prevailed against his unmanly intentions; by proving to you, that on one occasion, when he returned from the country, he distinctly and in terms, offered her marriage: previously however, taking special care that there should be no witnesses to their solemn contract; and I am in a situation to prove to you, on the testimony of three of his own friends — most unwilling witnesses, gentlemen — most unwilling witnesses — that on that morning he was discovered by them holding the plaintiff in his arms, and soothing her agitation by his caresses and endearments."

A visible impression was produced upon the auditors by this part of the learned sergeant's address. Drawing forth two very small scraps of paper, he proceeded —

"And now, gentlemen, but one word more. Two letters have passed between these parties, letters which are admitted to be in the handwriting of the defendant, and which speak volumes indeed. These letters, too, bespeak the character of the man. They are not open, fervent, eloquent epistles, breathing nothing but the language of affectionate attachment. They are covert, sly, underhanded communications, but, fortunately, far more conclusive than if couched in the most glowing language and the most poetic imagery — letters that must be viewed with a cautious and suspicious eye — letters that were evidently intended at the time, by Pickwick, to mislead and delude any third parties into whose hands they might fall. Let me read the first: — 'Garraway's,

twelve o'clock. Dear Mrs. B. — Chops and Tomato-sauce. Yours, PICKWICK.' Gentlemen, what does this mean? Chops and Tomato-sauce. Yours, Pickwick! Chops! Gracious heavens! and Tomato-sauce! Gentlemen, is the happiness of a sensitive and confiding female to be trifled away, by such shallow artifices as these? The next has no date whatever, which is in itself suspicious. — 'Dear Mrs. B. — I shall not be at home till to-morrow. Slow coach.' And then follows this very very remarkable expression — 'Don't trouble yourself about the warming-pan.' The warming-pan! Why, gentlemen, who *does* trouble himself about a warming-pan? When was the peace of mind of man or woman broken or disturbed by a warming-pan, which is in itself a harmless, a useful, and I will add, gentlemen, a comforting article of domestic furniture? Why is Mrs. Bardell so earnestly entreated not to agitate herself about this warming-pan, unless (as is no doubt the case) it is a mere cover for hidden fire — a mere substitute for some endearing word or promise, agreeably to a preconcerted system of correspondence, artfully contrived by Pickwick with a view to his contemplated desertion, and which I am not in a condition to explain? And what does this allusion to the slow coach mean? For aught I know, it may be a reference to Pickwick himself, who has most unquestionably been a criminally slow coach during the whole of this transaction, but whose speed will now be very unexpectedly accelerated, and whose wheels, gentlemen, as he will find to his cost, will very soon be greased by you!"

Mr. Sergeant Buzfuz paused in this place, to see whether the jury smiled at his joke; but as nobody took it but the green-grocer, whose sensitiveness on the

subject was very probably occasioned by his having subjected a chaise-cart to the process in question on that identical morning, the learned sergeant considered it advisable to undergo a slight relapse into the dismals before he concluded.

"But enough of this, gentlemen," said Mr. Sergeant Buzfuz, "it is difficult to smile with an aching heart; it is ill jesting when our deepest sympathies are awakened. My client's hopes and prospects are ruined, and it is no figure of speech to say that her occupation is gone indeed. The bill is down — but there is no tenant. Eligible single gentlemen pass and repass — but there is no invitation for them to inquire within or without. All is gloom and silence in the house; even the voice of the child is hushed; his infant sports are disregarded when his mother weeps; his 'alley tors' and his 'commoneys' are alike neglected; he forgets the long familiar cry of 'knuckle down,' and at tip-cheese, or odd and even, his hand is out. But Pickwick, gentlemen, Pickwick, the ruthless destroyer of this domestic oasis in the desert of Goswell Street — Pickwick, who has choked up the well, and thrown ashes on the sward — Pickwick, who comes before you to-day with his heartless Tomato-sauce and warming-pans — Pickwick still rears his head with unblushing effrontery, and gazes without a sigh on the ruin he has made. Damages, gentlemen — heavy damages is the only punishment with which you can visit him; the only recompense you can award to my client. And for those damages she now appeals to an enlightened, a high-minded, a right-feeling, a conscientious, a dispassionate, a sympathizing, a contemplative jury of her civilized countrymen." With this beautiful peroration, Mr. Sergeant Buzfuz sat down, and Mr. Justice Stareleigh woke up.

"Call Elizabeth Cluppins," said Sergeant Buzfuz, rising a minute afterwards, with renewed vigor.

The nearest usher called for Elizabeth Tuppins; another one, at a little distance off, demanded Elizabeth Jupkins; and a third rushed in a breathless state into King Street, and screamed for Elizabeth Muffins till he was hoarse.

Meanwhile Mrs. Cluppins, with the combined assistance of Mrs. Bardell, Mrs. Sanders, Mr. Dodson, and Mr. Fogg, was hoisted into the witness-box; and when she was safely perched on the top step, Mrs. Bardell stood on the bottom one, with the pocket-handkerchief and pattens in one hand, and a glass bottle that might hold about a quarter of a pint of smelling salts in the other, ready for any emergency. Mrs. Sanders, whose eyes were intently fixed on the judge's face, planted herself close by, with the large umbrella: keeping her right thumb pressed on the spring with an earnest countenance, as if she were fully prepared to put it up at a moment's notice.

"Mrs. Cluppins," said Sergeant Buzfuz, "pray compose yourself, ma'am." Of course, directly Mrs. Cluppins was desired to compose herself she sobbed with increased vehemence, and gave divers alarming manifestations of an approaching fainting fit, or, as she afterwards said, of her feelings being too many for her.

"Do you recollect, Mrs. Cluppins?" said Sergeant Buzfuz, after a few unimportant questions, "do you recollect being in Mrs. Bardell's back one pair of stairs, on one particular morning in July last, when she was dusting Pickwick's apartment?"

"Yes, my Lord and Jury, I do," replied Mrs. Cluppins.

"Mr. Pickwick's sitting-room was the first-floor front, I believe?"

"Yes, it were, sir," replied Mrs. Cluppins.

"What were you doing in the back room, ma'am?" inquired the little judge.

"My Lord and Jury," said Mrs. Cluppins, with interesting agitation, "I will not deceive you."

"You had better not, ma'am," said the little judge.

"I was there," resumed Mrs. Cluppins, "unbeknown to Mrs. Bardell; I had been out with a little basket, gentlemen, to buy three pound of red kidney purtaties, which was three pound tuppense ha'penny, when I see Mrs. Bardell's street-door on the jar."

"On the what?" exclaimed the little judge.

"Partly open, my Lord," said Sergeant Snubbin.

"She *said* on the jar," said the little judge, with a cunning look.

"It's all the same, my Lord," said Sergeant Snubbin. The little judge looked doubtful, and said he'd make a note of it. Mrs. Cluppins then resumed:

"I walked in, gentlemen, just to say good-mornin', and went, in a permiscuous manner, up-stairs, and into the back room. Gentlemen, there was the sound of voices in the front room, and"—

"And you listened, I believe, Mrs. Cluppins?" said Sergeant Buzfuz.

"Beggin' your pardon, sir," replied Mrs. Cluppins, in a majestic manner, "I would scorn the haction. The voices was very loud, sir, and forced themselves upon my ear."

"Well, Mrs. Cluppins, you were not listening, but you heard the voices. Was one of those voices, Pickwick's?"

"Yes, it were, sir."

And Mrs. Cluppins, after distinctly stating that Mr. Pickwick addressed himself to Mrs. Bardell, repeated, by slow degrees, and by dint of many questions, the conversation with which our readers are already acquainted.

The jury looked suspicious, and Mr. Sergeant Buzfuz smiled and sat down. They looked positively awful when Sergeant Snubbin intimated that he should not cross-examine the witness, for Mr. Pickwick wished it to be distinctly stated that it was due to her to say, that her account was in substance correct.

Mrs. Cluppins having once broken the ice, thought it a favorable opportunity for entering into a short dissertation on her own domestic affairs; so, she straightway proceeded to inform the court that she was the mother of eight children at that present speaking, and that she entertained confident expectations of presenting Mr. Cluppins with the ninth, somewhere about that day six months. At this interesting point, the little judge interposed most irascibly; and the effect of the interposition was, that both the worthy lady and Mrs. Sanders were politely taken out of court, under the escort of Mr. Jackson, without further parley.

"Nathaniel Winkle!" said Mr. Skimpin.

"Here!" replied a feeble voice. Mr. Winkle entered the witness-box, and having been duly sworn, bowed to the judge with considerable deference.

"Don't look at me, sir," said the judge, sharply, in acknowledgment of the salute; "look at the jury."

Mr. Winkle obeyed the mandate, and looked at the place where he thought it most probable the jury might be; for seeing anything in his then state of intellectual complication was wholly out of the question.

Mr. Winkle was then examined by Mr. Skimpin, who, being a promising young man of two or three and forty, was of course anxious to confuse a witness who was notoriously predisposed in favor of the other side, as much as he could.

"Now, sir," said Mr. Skimpin, "have the goodness to let his Lordship and the jury know what your name is, will you?" And Mr. Skimpin inclined his head on one side to listen with great sharpness to the answer, and glanced at the jury meanwhile, as if to imply that he rather expected Mr. Winkle's natural taste for perjury would induce him to give some name which did not belong to him.

"Winkle," replied the witness.

"What's your Christian name, sir?" angrily inquired the little judge.

"Nathaniel, sir."

"Daniel, — any other name?"

"Nathaniel, Sir — my Lord, I mean."

"Nathaniel Daniel, or Daniel Nathaniel?"

"No, my Lord, only Nathaniel — not Daniel at all."

"What did you tell me it was Daniel for then, sir?" inquired the judge.

"I didn't, my Lord," replied Mr. Winkle.

"You did, sir," replied the judge, with a severe frown. "How could I have got Daniel on my notes, unless you told me so, sir?"

This argument was, of course, unanswerable.

"Mr. Winkle has rather a short memory, my Lord," interposed Mr. Skimpin, with another glance at the jury. "We shall find means to refresh it before we have quite done with him, I dare say."

"You had better be careful sir," said the little judge, with a sinister look at the witness.

Poor Mr. Winkle bowed, and endeavored to feign an easiness of manner, which, in his then state of confusion, gave him rather the air of a disconcerted pickpocket.

"Now, Mr. Winkle," said Mr. Skimpin, "attend to me, if you please, sir; and let me recommend you, for your own sake, to bear in mind his Lordship's injunctions to be careful. I believe you are a particular friend of Pickwick, the defendant, are you not?"

"I have known Mr. Pickwick now, as well as I recollect at this moment, nearly" —

"Pray, Mr. Winkle, do not evade the question. Are you, or are you not, a particular friend of the defendant's?"

"I was just about to say, that" —

"Will you, or will you not, answer my question, sir?"

"If you don't answer the question, you'll be committed, sir," interposed the little judge, looking over his note-book.

"Come, sir," said Mr. Skimpin, "yes or no, if you please."

"Yes, I am,"

"Yes, you are. And why couldn't you say that at once, sir? Perhaps you know the plaintiff too — eh, Mr. Winkle?"

"I don't know her; I've seen her."

"Oh, you don't know her, but you've seen her? Now, have the goodness to tell the gentlemen of the jury what you mean by *that*, Mr. Winkle."

"I mean that I am not intimate with her, but that I have seen her when I went to call on Mr. Pickwick, in Goswell Street."

"How often have you seen her, sir?"

"How often?"

"Yes, Mr. Winkle, how often? I'll repeat the question for you a dozen times, if you require it, sir." And the learned gentleman, with a firm and steady frown, placed his hands on his hips, and smiled suspiciously at the jury.

On this question there arose the edifying brow-beating, customary on such points. First of all, Mr. Winkle said it was quite impossible for him to say how many times he had seen Mrs. Bardell. Then he was asked if he had seen her twenty times, to which he replied, "Certainly, — more than that." Then he was asked whether he hadn't seen her a hundred times — whether he couldn't swear that he had seen her more than fifty times — whether he didn't know that he had seen her at least seventy-five times — and so forth; the satisfactory conclusion which was arrived at, at last, being, that he had better take care of himself, and mind what he was about. The witness having been by these means reduced to the requisite ebb of nervous perplexity, the examination was continued as follows:

"Pray, Mr. Winkle, do you remember calling on the defendant Pickwick at these apartments in the plaintiff's house in Goswell Street, on one particular morning, in the month of July last?"

"Yes, I do."

"Were you accompanied on that occasion by a friend of the name of Tupman, and another of the name of Snodgrass?"

"Yes, I was."

"Are they here?"

"Yes, they are," replied Mr. Winkle, looking very earnestly towards the spot where his friends were stationed.

"Pray attend to me, Mr. Winkle, and never mind

your friends," said Mr. Skimpin, with another expressive look at the jury. "They must tell their stories without any previous consultation with you, if none has yet taken place (another look at the jury). Now, sir, tell the gentlemen of the jury what you saw on entering the defendant's room, on this particular morning. Come; out with it, sir; we must have it, sooner or later."

"The defendant, Mr. Pickwick, was holding the plaintiff in his arms, with his hands clasping her waist," replied Mr. Winkle, with natural hesitation, "and the plaintiff appeared to have fainted away."

"Did you hear the defendant say anything?"

"I heard him call Mrs. Bardell a good creature, and I heard him ask her to compose herself, for what a situation it was, if anybody should come, or words to that effect."

"Now, Mr. Winkle, I have only one more question to ask you, and I beg you to bear in mind his lordship's caution. Will you undertake to swear that Pickwick, the defendant, did not say on the occasion in question, 'My dear Mrs. Bardell, you're a good creature; compose yourself to this situation, for to this situation you must come,' or words to *that* effect?"

"I — I didn't understand him so, certainly," said Mr. Winkle, astounded at this ingenious dove-tailing of the few words he had heard. "I was on the staircase, and couldn't hear distinctly; the impression on my mind is" —

"The gentlemen of the jury want none of the impressions on your mind, Mr. Winkle, which I fear would be of little service to honest, straightforward men," interposed Mr. Skimpin. "You were on the staircase, and didn't distinctly hear; but you will not swear that Pick-

wick did not make use of the expressions I have quoted? Do I understand that?"

"No I will not," replied Mr. Winkle; and down sat Mr. Skimpin with a triumphant countenance.

Mr. Pickwick's case had not gone off in so particularly happy a manner, up to this point, that it could very well afford to have any additional suspicion cast upon it. But as it could afford to be placed in a rather better light, if possible, Mr. Phunky rose for the purpose of getting something important out of Mr. Winkle in cross-examination. Whether he did get anything important out of him, will immediately appear.

"I believe, Mr. Winkle," said Mr. Phunky, "that Mr. Pickwick is not a young man?"

"Oh no," replied Mr. Winkle; "old enough to be my father."

"You have told my learned friend that you have known Mr. Pickwick a long time. Had you ever any reason to suppose or believe that he was about to be married?"

"Oh no; certainly not;" replied Mr. Winkle with so much eagerness, that Mr. Phunky ought to have got him out of the box with all possible despatch. Lawyers hold that there are two kinds of particularly bad witnesses: a reluctant witness, and a too-willing witness; it was Mr. Winkle's fate to figure in both characters.

"I will even go further than this, Mr. Winkle," continued Mr. Phunky in a most smooth and complacent manner. "Did you ever see anything in Mr. Pickwick's manner and conduct towards the opposite sex, to induce you to believe that he ever contemplated matrimony of late years, in any case?"

"Oh no; certainly not," replied Mr. Winkle.

"Has his behavior, when females have been in the case, always been that of a man, who, having attained a pretty advanced period of life, content with his own occupations and amusements, treats them only as a father might his daughters?"

"Not the least doubt of it," replied Mr. Winkle, in the fulness of his heart. "That is — yes — oh yes — certainly."

"You have never known anything in his behavior towards Mrs. Bardell, or any other female, in the least degree suspicious?" said Mr. Phunky, preparing to sit down; for Sergeant Snubbin was winking at him.

"N — n — no," replied Mr. Winkle, "except on one trifling occasion, which, I have no doubt, might be easily explained."

Now, if the unfortunate Mr. Phunky had sat down when Sergeant Snubbin winked at him, or if Sergeant Buzfuz had stopped this irregular cross-examination at the outset (which he knew better than to do; observing Mr. Winkle's anxiety, and well knowing it would, in all probability, lead to something serviceable to him), this unfortunate admission would not have been elicited. The moment the words fell from Mr. Winkle's lips, Mr. Phunky sat down, and Sergeant Snubbin rather hastily told him he might leave the box, which Mr. Winkle prepared to do with great readiness, when Sergeant Buzfuz stopped him.

"Stay, Mr. Winkle — stay!" said Sergeant Buzfuz; "will your Lordship have the goodness to ask him, what this one instance of suspicious behavior towards females on the part of this gentleman, who is old enough to be his father, was?"

"You hear what the learned counsel says, sir," ob-

served the judge, turning to the miserable and agonized Mr. Winkle. "Describe the occasion to which you refer."

"My Lord," said Mr. Winkle, trembling with anxiety, "I — I'd rather not."

"Perhaps so," said the little judge; "but you must."

Amid the profound silence of the whole court, Mr. Winkle faltered out, that the trifling circumstance of suspicion was Mr. Pickwick's being found in a lady's sleeping apartment at midnight; which had terminated, he believed, in the breaking off of the projected marriage of the lady in question, and had led, he knew, to the whole party being forcibly carried before George Nupkins, Esq., magistrate and justice of the peace, for the borough of Ipswich.

"You may leave the box, sir," said Sergeant Snubbin. Mr. Winkle *did* leave the box, and rushed with delirious haste to the George and Vulture, where he was discovered some hours after, by the waiter, groaning in a hollow and dismal manner, with his head buried beneath the sofa cushions.

Tracy Tupman, and Augustus Snodgrass, were severally called into the box; both corroborated the testimony of their unhappy friend; and each was driven to the verge of desperation by excessive badgering.

Susannah Sanders was then called, and examined by Sergeant Buzfuz, and cross-examined by Sergeant Snubbin. Had always said and believed that Pickwick would marry Mrs. Bardell; knew that Mrs. Bardell's being engaged to Pickwick was the current topic of conversation in the neighborhood, after the fainting in July; had been told it herself by Mrs. Mudberry which kept a mangle, and Mrs. Bunkin which clear-starched, but did

not see either Mrs. Mudberry or Mrs. Bunkin in court. Had heard Pickwick ask the little boy how he should like to have another father. Did not know that Mrs. Bardell was at that time keeping company with the baker, but did know that the baker was then a single man and is now married. Couldn't swear that Mrs. Bardell was not very fond of the baker, but should think that the baker was not very fond of Mrs. Bardell, or he wouldn't have married somebody else. Thought Mrs. Bardell fainted away on the morning in July, because Mr. Pickwick asked her to name the day; knew that she (witness) fainted away stone dead when Mr. Sanders asked *her* to name the day, and believed that everybody as called herself a lady would do the same, under similar circumstances. Heard Pickwick ask the boy the question about the marbles, but upon her oath did not know the difference between an alley tor and a commoney.

By the Court. — During the period of her keeping company with Mr. Sanders had received love-letters, like other ladies. In the course of their correspondence Mr. Sanders had often called her a "duck," but never "chops" nor yet "tomato-sauce." He was particularly fond of ducks. Perhaps if he had been as fond of chops and tomato-sauce, he might have called her that, as a term of affection.

Sergeant Buzfuz now rose with more importance than he had yet exhibited, if that were possible, and vociferated "Call Samuel Weller."

It was quite unnecessary to call Samuel Weller; for Samuel Weller stepped briskly into the box the instant his name was pronounced; and placing his hat on the floor, and his arms on the rail, took a bird's-eye view

of the bar, and a comprehensive survey of the bench with a remarkably cheerful and lively aspect.

"What's your name, sir?" inquired the judge.

"Sam Weller, my Lord," replied that gentleman.

"Do you spell it with a 'V' or a 'W'?" inquired the judge.

"That depends upon the taste and fancy of the speller, my Lord," replied Sam, "I never had occasion to spell it more than once or twice in my life, but I spells it with a 'V.'"

Here a voice in the gallery exclaimed aloud, "Quite right too, Samivel; quite right. Put it down a we, my Lord, put it down a we."

"Who is that, who dares to address the court?" said the little judge, looking up, "Usher."

"Yes, my Lord."

"Bring that person here instantly."

"Yes, my Lord."

But as the usher didn't find the person, he didn't bring him; and, after a great commotion, all the people who had got up to look for the culprit, sat down again. The little judge turned to the witness as soon as his indignation would allow him to speak, and said,

"Do you know who that was, sir?"

"I raythor suspect it was my father, my Lord," replied Sam.

"Do you see him here now?" said the judge.

"No, I don't my Lord," replied Sam, staring right up into the lantern in the roof of the court.

"If you could have pointed him out, I would have committed him instantly," said the judge.

Sam bowed his acknowledgments and turned, with unimpaired cheerfulness of countenance, towards Sergeant Buzfuz.

"Now, Mr. Weller," said Sergeant Buzfuz.

"Now, sir," replied Sam.

"I believe you are in the service of Mr. Pickwick, the defendant in this case. Speak up, if you please, Mr. Weller."

"I mean to speak up, sir," replied Sam, "I am in the service o' that 'ere gen'l'm'n, and a wery good service it is."

"Little to do, and plenty to get, I suppose?" said Sergeant Buzfuz, with jocularity.

"Oh, quite enough to get, sir, as the soldier said ven they ordered him three hundred and fifty lashes," replied Sam.

"You must not tell us what the soldier, or any other man, said, sir," interposed the judge, "it's not evidence."

"Wery good, my Lord," replied Sam.

"Do you recollect anything particular happening on the morning when you were first engaged by the defendant; eh, Mr. Weller?" said Sergeant Buzfuz.

"Yes I do, sir," replied Sam.

"Have the goodness to tell the jury what it was."

"I had a reg'lar new fit out o' clothes that mornin', gen'l'men of the jury," said Sam, "and that was a wery partickler and uncommon circumstance vith me in those days."

Hereupon there was a general laugh; and the little judge, looking with an angry countenance over his desk, said, "You had better be careful, sir."

"So Mr. Pickwick said at the time, my Lord," replied Sam, "and I was wery careful o' that 'ere suit o' clothes; wery careful, indeed, my lord."

The judge looked sternly at Sam for full two minutes, but Sam's features were so perfectly calm and serene that

the judge said nothing, and motioned Sergeant Buzfuz to proceed.

"Do you mean to tell me, Mr. Weller," said Sergeant Buzfuz, folding his arms emphatically, and turning half round to the jury, as if in mute assurance that he would bother the witness yet — "Do you mean to tell me, Mr. Weller, that you saw nothing of this fainting on the part of the plaintiff in the arms of the defendant, which you have heard described by the witnesses?"

"Certainly not," replied Sam, "I was in the passage till they called me up, and then the old lady was not there."

"Now, attend, Mr. Weller," said Sergeant Buzfuz, dipping a large pen into the inkstand before him, for the purpose of frightening Sam with a show of taking down his answer. "You were in the passage and yet saw nothing of what was going forward. Have you a pair of eyes, Mr. Weller?"

"Yes, I have a pair of eyes," replied Sam, "and that's just it. If they wos a pair o' patent double million magnifyin' gas microscopes of hextra power, p'raps I might be able to see through a flight o' stairs and a deal door; but bein' only eyes you see, my wision's limited."

At this answer, which was delivered without the slightest appearance of irritation, and with the most complete simplicity and equanimity of manner, the spectators tittered, the little judge smiled, and Sergeant Buzfuz looked particularly foolish. After a short consultation with Dodson and Fogg, the learned Sergeant again turned towards Sam, and said, with a painful effort to conceal his vexation, "Now, Mr. Weller, I'll ask you a question on another point, if you please."

"If you please, sir," rejoined Sam, with the utmost good-humor.

"Do you remember going up to Mrs. Bardell's house, one night in November last?"

"Oh yes, wery well."

"Oh, you *do* remember that, Mr. Weller," said Sergeant Buzfuz, recovering his spirits, "I thought we should get at something at last."

"I raythor thought that, too, sir," replied Sam; and at this the spectators tittered again.

"Well; I suppose you went up to have a little talk about this trial — eh, Mr. Weller?" said Sergeant Buzfuz, looking knowingly at the jury.

"I went up to pay the rent; but we *did* get a-talkin' about the trial," replied Sam.

"Oh, you did get a-talking about the trial," said Sergeant Buzfuz, brightening up with the anticipation of some important discovery. "Now what passed about the trial; will you have the goodness to tell us, Mr. Weller?"

"Vith all the pleasure in life, sir," replied Sam. "Arter a few unimportant obserwations from the two wirtuous females as has been examined here to-day, the ladies gets into a wery great state o' admiration at the honorable conduct of Mr. Dodson and Fogg — them two gen'l'men as is settin' near you now." This, of course, drew general attention to Dodson and Fogg, who looked as virtuous as possible.

"The attorneys for the plaintiff," said Mr. Sergeant Buzfuz, "well, they spoke in high praise of the honorable conduct of Messrs. Dodson and Fogg, the attorneys for the plaintiff, did they?"

"Yes," said Sam, "they said what a wery gen'rous thing it was o' them to have taken up the case on spec, and to charge nothin' at all for costs, unless they got 'em out of Mr. Pickwick."

At this very unexpected reply, the spectators tittered again, and Dodson and Fogg, turning very red, leant over to Sergeant Buzfuz, and in a hurried manner whispered something in his ear.

"You are quite right," said Sergeant Buzfuz aloud, with affected composure. "It's perfectly useless, my Lord, attempting to get at any evidence through the impenetrable stupidity of this witness. I will not trouble the court by asking him any more questions. Stand down, sir."

"Would any other gen'l'm'n like to ask me anythin'?" inquired Sam, taking up his hat, and looking round most deliberately.

"Not I, Mr. Weller, thank you," said Sergeant Snubbin, laughing.

"You may go down, sir," said Sergeant Buzfuz, waving his hand impatiently. Sam went down accordingly, after doing Messrs. Dodson and Fogg's case as much harm as he conveniently could, and saying just as little respecting Mr. Pickwick as might be, which was precisely the object he had had in view all along.

"I have no objection to admit, my Lord," said Sergeant Snubbin, "if it will save the examination of another witness, that Mr. Pickwick has retired from business, and is a gentleman of considerable independent property."

"Very well," said Sergeant Buzfuz, putting in the two letters to be read. "Then that's my case, my Lord."

Sergeant Snubbin then addressed the jury on behalf of the defendant; and a very long and a very emphatic address he delivered, in which he bestowed the highest possible eulogiums on the conduct and character of Mr. Pickwick; but inasmuch as our readers are far better

able to form a correct estimate of that gentleman's merits and deserts, than Sergeant Snubbin could possibly be, we do not feel called upon to enter at any length into the learned gentleman's observations. He attempted to show that the letters which had been exhibited, merely related to Mr. Pickwick's dinner, or to the preparations for receiving him in his apartments on his return from some country excursion. It is sufficient to add in general terms that he did the best he could for Mr. Pickwick; and the best, as everybody knows, on the infallible authority of the old adage, could do no more.

Mr. Justice Stareleigh summed up, in the old-established and most approved form. He read as much of his notes to the jury as he could decipher on so short a notice, and made running comments on the evidence as he went along. If Mrs. Bardell were right, it was perfectly clear Mr. Pickwick was wrong, and if they thought the evidence of Mrs. Cluppins worthy of credence they would believe it, and, if they didn't, why they wouldn't. If they were satisfied that a breach of promise of marriage had been committed, they would find for the plaintiff with such damages as they thought proper; and if, on the other hand, it appeared to them that no promise of marriage had ever been given, they would find for the defendant with no damages at all. The jury then retired to their private room to talk the matter over, and the judge retired to *his* private room, to refresh himself with a mutton chop and a glass of sherry.

An anxious quarter of an hour elapsed; the jury came back; and the judge was fetched in. Mr. Pickwick put on his spectacles, and gazed at the foreman with an agitated countenance and a quickly beating heart.

"Gentlemen," said the individual in black, "are you all agreed upon your verdict?"

"We are," replied the foreman.

"Do you find for the plaintiff, gentlemen, or for the defendant?"

"For the plaintiff."

"With what damages, gentlemen?"

"Seven hundred and fifty pounds."

Mr. Pickwick took off his spectacles, carefully wiped the glasses, folded them into their case, and put them in his pocket; and then having drawn on his gloves with great nicety, and stared at the foreman all the while, he mechanically followed Mr. Perker and the blue bag out of court.

They stopped in a side room while Perker paid the court-fees; and here Mr. Pickwick was joined by his friends. Here, too, he encountered Messrs. Dodson and Fogg, rubbing their hands with every token of outward satisfaction.

"Well, gentlemen," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Well, sir," said Dodson: for self and partner.

"You imagine you'll get your costs, don't you, gentlemen?" said Mr. Pickwick.

Fogg said they thought it rather probable. Dodson smiled, and said they'd try.

"You may try, and try, and try again, Messrs. Dodson and Fogg," said Mr. Pickwick, vehemently, "but not one farthing of costs or damages do you ever get from me, if I spend the rest of my existence in a debtor's prison."

"Ha, ha!" laughed Dodson. "You'll think better of that before next term, Mr. Pickwick."

"He, he, he! we'll soon see about that, Mr. Pickwick," grinned Fogg.

Speechless with indignation, Mr. Pickwick allowed himself to be led by his solicitor and friends to the door, and there assisted into a hackney-coach, which had been fetched for the purpose by the ever watchful Sam Weller.

Sam had put up the steps, and was preparing to jump upon the box, when he felt himself gently touched on the shoulder; and, looking round, his father stood before him. The old gentleman's countenance wore a mournful expression, as he shook his head gravely, and said, in warning accents,

"I know'd what 'ud come o' this here mode o' doin' bisness. Oh, Sammy, Sammy, vy worn't there a alleybi!"

CHAPTER XXXV.

IN WHICH MR. PICKWICK THINKS HE HAD BETTER GO TO BATH; AND GOES ACCORDINGLY.

"But surely, my dear sir," said little Perker, as he stood in Mr. Pickwick's apartment on the morning after the trial: "Surely you don't really mean — really and seriously now, and irritation apart — that you won't pay these costs and damages?"

"Not one halfpenny," said Mr. Pickwick, firmly; "not one halfpenny."

"Hooroar for the principle, as the money-lender said ven he vouldn't renew the bill," observed Mr. Weller, who was clearing away the breakfast things.

"Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, "have the goodness to step down-stairs."

"Cert'nly, sir," replied Mr. Weller; and acting on Mr. Pickwick's gentle hint, Sam retired.

"No, Perker," said Mr. Pickwick, with great seriousness of manner, "my friends here, have endeavored to dissuade me from this determination, but without avail. I shall employ myself as usual, until the opposite party have the power of issuing a legal process of execution against me; and if they are vile enough to avail themselves of it and to arrest my person, I shall yield myself

up with perfect cheerfulness and content of heart. When can they do this?"

"They can issue execution, my dear sir, for the amount of the damages and taxed costs, next term," replied Perker, "just two months hence, my dear sir."

"Very good," said Mr. Pickwick. "Until that time, my dear fellow, let me hear no more of the matter. And now," continued Mr. Pickwick, looking round on his friends with a good-humored smile, and a sparkle in the eye which no spectacles could dim or conceal, "the only question is, Where shall we go, next?"

Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass were too much affected by their friend's heroism to offer any reply. Mr. Winkle had not yet sufficiently recovered the recollection of his evidence at the trial, to make any observation on any subject, so Mr. Pickwick paused in vain.

"Well," said that gentleman, "if you leave me to suggest our destination, I say Bath. I think none of us have ever been there."

Nobody had; and as the proposition was warmly seconded by Perker, who considered it extremely probable that if Mr. Pickwick saw a little change and gayety he would be inclined to think better of his determination, and worse of a debtor's prison, it was carried unanimously: and Sam was at once despatched to the White Horse Cellar, to take five places by the half-past seven o'clock coach, next morning.

There were just two places to be had inside, and just three to be had out; so Sam Weller booked for them all, and having exchanged a few compliments with the booking-office clerk on the subject of a pewter half-crown which was tendered him as a portion of his "change," walked back to the George and Vulture, where he was

pretty busily employed until bedtime in reducing clothes and linen into the smallest possible compass, and exerting his mechanical genius in constructing a variety of ingenious devices for keeping the lids on boxes which had neither locks nor hinges.

The next was a very unpropitious morning for a journey — muggy, damp, and drizzly. The horses in the stages that were going out, and had come through the city, were smoking so, that the outside passengers were invisible. The newspaper-sellers looked moist, and smelt mouldy; the wet ran off the hats of the orange-venders as they thrust their heads into the coach windows; and diluted the insides in a refreshing manner. The Jews with the fifty-bladed penknives shut them up in despair; the men with the pocket-books made pocket-books of them. Watch-guards and toasting-forks were alike at a discount, and pencil-cases and sponge were a drug in the market.

Leaving Sam Weller to rescue the luggage from the seven or eight porters who flung themselves savagely upon it, the moment the coach stopped: and finding that they were about twenty minutes too early: Mr. Pickwick and his friends went for shelter into the travellers' room — the last resource of human dejection.

The travellers' room at the White Horse Cellar is of course uncomfortable; it would be no travellers' room if it were not. It is the right-hand parlor, into which an aspiring kitchen fireplace appears to have walked, accompanied by a rebellious poker, tongs, and shovel. It is divided into boxes for the solitary confinement of travellers, and is furnished with a clock, a looking-glass, and a live waiter: which latter article is kept in a small kennel for washing glasses, in a corner of the apartment.

One of these boxes was occupied, on this particular occasion, by a stern-eyed man of about five-and-forty, who had a bald and glossy forehead, with a good deal of black hair at the sides and back of his head, and large black whiskers. He was buttoned up to the chin in a brown coat; and had a large seal-skin travelling cap, and a great-coat and cloak, lying on the seat beside him. He looked up from his breakfast as Mr. Pickwick entered, with a fierce and peremptory air, which was very dignified; and having scrutinized that gentleman and his companions to his entire satisfaction, hummed a tune, in a manner which seemed to say that he rather suspected somebody wanted to take advantage of him, but it wouldn't do.

"Waiter," said the gentleman with the whiskers.

"Sir?" replied a man with a dirty complexion, and a towel of the same, emerging from the kennel before mentioned.

"Some more toast."

"Yes, sir."

"Buttered toast, mind," said the gentleman, fiercely.

"D'rectly, sir," replied the waiter.

The gentleman with the whiskers hummed a tune in the same manner as before, and pending the arrival of the toast, advanced to the front of the fire, and, taking his coat-tails under his arms, looked at his boots, and ruminated.

"I wonder whereabouts in Bath this coach puts up," said Mr. Pickwick, mildly addressing Mr. Winkle.

"Hum — eh — what's that?" said the strange man.

"I made an observation to my friend, sir," replied Mr. Pickwick, always ready to enter into conversation. "I wondered at what house the Bath coach put up. Perhaps you can inform me."

"Are you going to Bath?" said the strange man.

"I am, sir," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"And those other gentlemen?"

"They are going also," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Not inside — I'll be damned if you're going inside," said the strange man.

"Not all of us," said Mr. Pickwick.

"No, not all of you," said the strange man emphatically. "I've taken two places. If they try to squeeze six people into an infernal box that only holds four, I'll take a post-chaise and bring an action. I've paid my fare. It won't do; I told the clerk when I took my places that it wouldn't do. I know these things have been done. I know they are done every day; but *I* never was done, and I never will be. Those who know me best, best know it; crush me!" Here the fierce gentleman rang the bell with great violence, and told the waiter he'd better bring the toast in five seconds, or he'd know the reason why.

"My good sir," said Mr. Pickwick, "you will allow me to observe that this is a very unnecessary display of excitement. I have only taken places inside, for two.

"I am glad to hear it," said the fierce man. "I withdraw my expressions. I tender an apology. There's my card. Give me your acquaintance."

"With great pleasure, sir," replied Mr. Pickwick. "We are to be fellow-travellers, and I hope we shall find each other's society mutually agreeable."

"I hope we shall," said the fierce gentleman. "I know we shall. I like your looks; they please me. Gentlemen, your hands and names. Know me."

Of course, an interchange of friendly salutations followed this gracious speech; and the fierce gentleman

immediately proceeded to inform the friends, in the same short, abrupt, jerking sentences, that his name was Dowler; that he was going to Bath on pleasure; that he was formerly in the army; that he had now set up in business as a gentleman; that he lived upon the profits; and that the individual for whom the second place was taken, was a personage no less illustrious than Mrs. Dowler, his lady wife.

"She's a fine woman," said Mr. Dowler. "I am proud of her. I have reason."

"I hope I shall have the pleasure of judging?" said Mr. Pickwick with a smile.

"You shall," replied Dowler. "She shall know you. She shall esteem you. I courted her under singular circumstances. I won her through a rash vow. Thus. I saw her; I loved her; I proposed; she refused me — 'You love another?' — 'Spare my blushes.' — 'I know him.' — 'You do.' — 'Very good; if he remains here I'll skin him.'"

"Lord bless me!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick involuntarily.

"Did you skin the gentleman, sir?" inquired Mr. Winkle, with a very pale face.

"I wrote him a note. I said it was a painful thing. And so it was."

"Certainly," interposed Mr. Winkle.

"I said I had pledged my word as a gentleman to skin him. My character was at stake. I had no alternative. As an officer in His Majesty's service, I was bound to skin him. I regretted the necessity, but it must be done. He was open to conviction. He saw that the rules of the service were imperative. He fled. I married her. Here's the coach. That's her head."

As Mr. Dowler concluded, he pointed to a stage which had just driven up: from the open window of which, a rather pretty face in a bright blue bonnet was looking among the crowd on the pavement: most probably for the rash man himself. Mr. Dowler paid his bill and hurried out with his travelling-cap, coat, and cloak; and Mr. Pickwick and his friends followed to secure their places.

Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass had seated themselves at the back part of the coach; Mr. Winkle had got inside; and Mr. Pickwick was preparing to follow him, when Sam Weller came up to his master, and whispering in his ear, begged to speak to him, with an air of the deepest mystery.

"Well, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, "what's the matter now?"

"Here's raythe a rum go, sir," replied Sam.

"What?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"This here, sir," rejoined Sam. "I'm wery much afeerd, sir, that the properiator o' this here coach is a-playin' some imperence vith us."

"How is that, Sam?" said Mr. Pickwick; "aren't the names down on the way-bill?"

"The names is not only down on the vay-bill, sir," replied Sam, "but they've painted vun on 'em up, on the door o' the coach." As Sam spoke, he pointed to that part of the coach-door on which the proprietor's name usually appears; and there, sure enough, in gilt letters of a goodly size, was the magic name of PICKWICK!

"Dear me," exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, quite staggered by the coincidence; "what a very extraordinary thing!"

"Yes, but that a'n't all," said Sam, again directing his master's attention to the coach-door; "not content vith

writin' up Pickwick, they puts 'Moses' afore it, vich I call addin' insult to injury, as the parrot said ven they not only took him from his native land, but made him talk the English langwidge arterwards."

"It's odd enough certainly, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick "but if we stand talking here, we shall lose our places."

"Wot, a'n't nothin' to be done in consequence, sir?" exclaimed Sam, perfectly aghast at the coolness with which Mr. Pickwick prepared to ensconce himself in side.

"Done!" said Mr. Pickwick. "What should be done?"

"A'n't nobody to be whopped for takin' this here liberty, sir?" said Mr. Weller, who had expected that at least he would have been commissioned to challenge the guard and coachman to a pugilistic encounter on the spot.

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Pickwick eagerly; "not on any account. Jump up to your seat directly."

"I'm wery much afeerd," muttered Sam to himself, as he turned away, "that somethin' queer's come over the governor, or he'd never ha' stood this so quiet. I hope that 'ere trial hasn't broke his spirit, but it looks bad: wery bad." Mr. Weller shook his head gravely; and it is worthy of remark, as an illustration of the manner in which he took this circumstance to heart, that he did not speak another word until the coach reached the Kensington turnpike: which was so long a time for him tc remain taciturn, that the fact may be considered wholly unprecedented.

Nothing worthy of special mention occurred during the journey. Mr. Dowler related a variety of anecdotes, all illustrative of his own personal prowess and

desperation, and appealed to Mrs. Dowler in corroboration thereof: when Mrs. Dowler invariably brought in, in the form of an appendix, some remarkable fact or circumstance which Mr. Dowler had forgotten, or had perhaps through modesty omitted: for the addenda in every instance went to show that Mr. Dowler was even a more wonderful fellow than he made himself out to be. Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Winkle listened with great admiration, and at intervals conversed with Mrs. Dowler, who was a very agreeable and fascinating person. So, what between Mr. Dowler's stories, and Mrs. Dowler's charms, and Mr. Pickwick's good-humor, and Mr. Winkle's good listening, the insides contrived to be very companionable all the way.

The outsides did as outsides always do. They were very cheerful and talkative at the beginning of every stage, and very dismal and sleepy in the middle, and very bright and wakeful again towards the end. There was one young gentleman in an India-rubber cloak, who smoked cigars all day; and there was another young gentleman in a parody upon a great-coat, who lighted a good many, and feeling obviously unsettled after the second whiff, threw them away when he thought nobody was looking at him. There was a third young man on the box who wished to be learned in cattle; and an old one behind, who was familiar with farming. There was a constant succession of Christian names in smock frocks and white coats, who were invited to have a "lift" by the guard, and who knew every horse and hostler on the road and off it; and there was a dinner which would have been cheap at half a crown a mouth, if any moderate number of mouths could have eaten it in the time. And at seven o'clock P.M., Mr. Pickwick and his friends,

and Mr. Dowler and his wife, respectively retired to their private sitting-rooms at the White Hart hotel, opposite the Great Pump Room, Bath, where the waiters, from their costume, might be mistaken for Westminster boys, only they destroy the illusion by behaving themselves so much better.

Breakfast had scarcely been cleared away on the succeeding morning, when a waiter brought in Mr. Dowler's card, with a request to be allowed permission to introduce a friend. Mr. Dowler at once followed up the delivery of the card, by bringing himself and the friend also.

The friend was a charming young man of not much more than fifty, dressed in a very bright blue coat with resplendent buttons, black trousers, and the thinnest possible pair of highly-polished boots. A gold eye-glass was suspended from his neck by a short broad black ribbon; a gold snuff-box was lightly clasped in his left hand; gold rings innumerable, glittered on his fingers; and a large diamond pin set in gold glistened in his shirt-frill. He had a gold watch, and a gold curb chain with large gold seals; and he carried a pliant ebony cane with a heavy gold top. His linen was of the very whitest, finest, and stiffest; his wig of the glossiest, blackest, and curliest. His snuff was princes' mixture; his scent *bouquet du roi*. His features were contracted into a perpetual smile; and his teeth were in such perfect order that it was difficult at a small distance to tell the real ones from the false.

"Mr. Pickwick," said Dowler; "my friend, Angelo Cyrus Bantam, Esquire, M. C. Bantam; Mr. Pickwick. Know each other."

"Welcome to Ba—ath, sir. This is indeed an acqui-

sition. Most welcome to Ba—ath, sir. It is long — very long, Mr. Pickwick, since you drank the waters. It appears an age, Mr. Pickwick. Re—markable!"

Such were the expressions with which Angelo Cyrus Bantam, Esquire, M. C., took Mr. Pickwick's hand; retaining it in his, meantime, and shrugging up his shoulders with a constant succession of bows, as if he really could not make up his mind to the trial of letting it go again.

"It is a very long time since I drank the waters, certainly," replied Mr. Pickwick; "for to the best of my knowledge, I was never here before."

"Never in Ba—ath, Mr. Pickwick!" exclaimed the Grand Master, letting the hand fall in astonishment. "Never in Ba—ath! He! he! Mr. Pickwick, you are a wag. Not bad, not bad. Good, good. He! he! he! Re—markable!"

"To my shame, I must say, that I am perfectly serious," rejoined Mr. Pickwick. "I really never was here, before."

"Oh, I see," exclaimed the Grand Master, looking extremely pleased; "Yes, yes — good, good — better and better. You are the gentleman of whom we have heard. Yes; we know you, Mr. Pickwick; we know you."

"The reports of the trial in those confounded papers," thought Mr. Pickwick. "They have heard all about me."

"You are the gentleman residing on Clapham Green," resumed Bantam, "who lost the use of his limbs from imprudently taking cold after port-wine — who could not be moved in consequence of acute suffering, and who had the water from the King's Bath bottled at one hundred

and three degrees, and sent by wagon to his bedroom in town, where he bathed, sneezed, and same day recovered, Very remarkable!"

Mr. Pickwick acknowledged the compliment which the supposition implied, but had the self-denial to repudiate it, notwithstanding; and taking advantage of a moment's silence on the part of the M. C., begged to introduce his friends, Mr. Tupman, Mr. Winkle, and Mr. Snodgrass — an introduction which of course overwhelmed the M. C. with delight and honor.

"Bantam," said Mr. Dowler, "Mr. Pickwick and his friends are strangers. They must put their names down. Where's the book?"

"The register of the distinguished visitors in Ba—ath will be at the Pump Room this morning at two o'clock," replied the M. C. "Will you guide our friends to that splendid building, and enable me to procure their autographs?"

"I will," rejoined Dowler. "This is a long call. It's time to go; I shall be here again in an hour. Come."

"This is a ball night," said the M. C., again taking Mr. Pickwick's hand, as he rose to go. "The ball-nights in Ba—ath are moments snatched from Paradise; rendered bewitching by music, beauty, elegance, fashion, etiquette, and—and—above all, by the absence of tradespeople, who are quite inconsistent with Paradise, and who have an amalgamation of themselves at the Guildhall every fortnight, which is, to say the least, remarkable. Good-by, good-by!" and protesting all the way down-stairs that he was most satisfied, and most delighted, and most overpowered, and most flattered, Angelo Cyrus Bantam, Esquire, M. C., stepped into a very elegant chariot that waited at the door, and rattled off.

At the appointed hour, Mr. Pickwick and his friends, escorted by Dowler, repaired to the Assembly Rooms, and wrote their names down in the book — an instance of condescension at which Angelo Bantam was even more overpowered than before. Tickets of admission to that evening's assembly were to have been prepared for the whole party, but as they were not ready, Mr. Pickwick undertook, despite all the protestations to the contrary of Angelo Bantam, to send Sam for them at four o'clock in the afternoon, to the M. C.'s house in Queen Square. Having taken a short walk through the city, and arrived at the unanimous conclusion that Park Street was very much like the perpendicular streets a man sees in a dream, which he cannot get up for the life of him, they returned to the White Hart, and despatched Sam on the errand to which his master had pledged him.

Sam Weller put on his hat in a very easy and graceful manner, and thrusting his hands in his waistcoat pockets, walked with great deliberation to Queen Square, whistling as he went along, several of the most popular airs of the day, as arranged with entirely new movements for that noble instrument the organ, either mouth or barrel. Arriving at the number in Queen Square to which he had been directed, he left off whistling, and gave a cheerful knock, which was instantaneously answered by a powdered-headed footman in gorgeous livery, and of symmetrical stature.

"Is this here Mr. Bantam's, old feller?" inquired Sam Weller, nothing abashed by the blaze of splendor which burst upon his sight, in the person of the powdered-headed footman with the gorgeous livery.

"Why, young man?" was the haughty inquiry of the powdered-headed footman.

"'Cos if it is, jist you step into him with that 'ere card, and say Mr. Veller's a-waitin', will you?" said Sam. And saying it, he very coolly walked into the hall, and sat down.

The powdered-headed footman slammed the door very hard, and scowled very grandly; but both the slam and the scowl were lost upon Sam, who was regarding a mahogany umbrella-stand with every outward token of critical approval.

Apparently, his master's reception of the card had impressed the powdered-headed footman in Sam's favor, for when he came back from delivering it, he smiled in a friendly manner, and said that the answer would be ready directly.

"Wery good," said Sam. "Tell the old gen'l'm'n not to put himself in a persperation. No hurry, six-foot. I've had my dinner."

"You dine early, sir," said the powdered-headed footman.

"I find I gets on better at supper when I does," replied Sam.

"Have you been long in Bath, sir?" inquired the powdered-headed footman. "I have not had the pleasure of hearing of you before."

"I haven't created any wery surprisin' sensation here, as yet," rejoined Sam, "for me and the other fash'nables only come last night."

"Nice place, sir," said the powdered-headed footman.

"Seems so," observed Sam.

"Pleasant society, sir," remarked the powdered-headed footman. "Very agreeable servants, sir."

"I should think they wos," replied Sam. "Affable, unaffected, say-nothin'-to-nobody sort o' fellers."

"Oh, very much so, indeed, sir," said the powdered-headed footman, taking Sam's remark as a high compliment. "Very much so indeed. Do you do anything in this way, sir?" inquired the tall footman, producing a small snuff-box with a fox's head on the top of it.

"Not without sneezing," replied Sam.

"Why it *is* difficult, sir, I confess," said the tall footman. "It may be done by degrees, sir. Coffee is the best practice. I carried coffee, sir, for a long time. It looks very like rappee, sir."

Here, a sharp peal at the bell, reduced the powdered-headed footman to the ignominious necessity of putting the fox's head in his pocket, and hastening with a humble countenance to Mr. Bantam's "study." By-the-by, who ever knew a man who never read or wrote either, who hadn't got some small back parlor which he *would* call a study!

"There is the answer, sir," said the powdered-headed footman. "I am afraid you'll find it inconveniently large."

"Don't mention it," said Sam, taking a letter with a small enclosure. "It's just possible as exhausted natur' may manage to surwive it."

"I hope we shall meet again, sir," said the powdered-headed footman, rubbing his hands, and following Sam out to the door-step.

"You are wery obligin', sir," replied Sam. "Now, don't allow yourself to be fatigued beyond your powers; there's a amiable bein'. Consider what you owe to society, and don't let yourself be injured by too much work. For the sake o' your feller-creeturs, keep yourself as quiet as you can; only think what a loss you

would be!" With these pathetic words, Sam Weller departed.

"A very singular young man that," said the powdered-headed footman, looking after Mr. Weller, with a countenance which clearly showed he could make nothing of him.

Sam said nothing at all. He winked, shook his head, smiled, winked again; and with an expression of countenance which seemed to denote that he was greatly amused with something or other, walked merrily away.

At precisely twenty minutes before eight o'clock that night, Angelo Cyrus Bantam, Esquire, the Master of the Ceremonies, emerged from his chariot at the door of the Assembly Rooms in the same wig, the same teeth, the same eye-glass, the same watch and seals, the same rings, the same shirt-pin, and the same cane. The only observable alterations in his appearance, were, that he wore a brighter blue coat, with a white silk lining: black tights, black silk stockings, and pumps, and a white waistcoat, and was, if possible, just a thought more scented.

Thus attired, the Master of the Ceremonies, in strict discharge of the important duties of his all-important office, planted himself in the rooms to receive the company.

Bath being full, the company, and the sixpences for tea, poured in, in shoals. In the ball-room, the long card-room, the octagonal card-room, the staircases, and the passages, the hum of many voices, and the sound of many feet, were perfectly bewildering. Dresses rustled, feathers waved, lights shone, and jewels sparkled. There was the music — not of the quadrille band, for it had not

yet commenced; but the music of soft tiny footsteps, with now and then a clear merry laugh — low and gentle, but very pleasant to hear in a female voice, whether in Bath or elsewhere. Brilliant eyes, lighted up with pleasurable expectation, gleamed from every side; and look where you would, some exquisite form glided gracefully through the throng, and was no sooner lost, than it was replaced by another, as dainty and bewitching.

In the tea-room, and hovering round the card-tables, were a vast number of queer old ladies and decrepit old gentlemen, discussing all the small talk and scandal of the day, with an evident relish and gusto which sufficiently bespoke the intensity of the pleasure they derived from the occupation. Mingled with these groups, were three or four matchmaking mammas, appearing to be wholly absorbed by the conversation in which they were taking part, but failing not, from time to time, to cast an anxious sidelong glance upon their daughters, who, remembering the maternal injunction to make the best use of their youth, had already commenced incipient flirtations in the mislaying of scarves, putting on gloves, setting down cups, and so forth; slight matters apparently, but which may be turned to surprisingly good account by expert practitioners.

Lounging near the doors, and in remote corners, were various knots of silly young men, displaying various varieties of puppyism and stupidity; amusing all sensible people near them with their folly and conceit; and happily thinking themselves the objects of general admiration — a wise and merciful dispensation, which no good man will quarrel with.

And lastly, seated on the some of the back benches, where they had already taken up their positions for the

evening, were divers unmarried ladies past their grand climacteric, who, not dancing because there were no partners for them, and not playing cards lest they should be set down as irretrievably single, were in the favorable situation of being able to abuse everybody without reflecting on themselves. In short, they could abuse everybody because everybody was there. It was a scene of gayety, glitter, and show; of richly-dressed people, handsome mirrors, chalked floors, girandoles, and wax-candles; and in all parts of the scene, gliding from spot to spot in silent softness: bowing obsequiously to this party, nodding familiarly to that, and smiling complacently on all; was the sprucely attired person of Angelo Cyrus Bantam, Esquire, the Master of the Ceremonies.

"Stop in the tea-room. Take your sixpenn'orth. They lay on hot water, and call it tea. Drink it," said Mr. Dowler, in a loud voice, directing Mr. Pickwick, who advanced at the head of the little party, with Mrs. Dowler on his arm. Into the tea-room Mr. Pickwick turned; and catching sight of him, Mr. Bantam corkscrewed his way through the crowd, and welcomed him with ecstasy.

"My dear sir, I am highly honored. Ba—ath is favored. Mrs. Dowler, you embellish the rooms. I congratulate you on your feathers. Re—markable!"

"Anybody here?" inquired Dowler suspiciously.

"Anybody! The *élite* of Ba—ath. Mr. Pickwick, do you see the lady in the gauze turban?"

"The fat old lady?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, innocently.

"Hush, my dear sir — nobody's fat or old in Ba—ath. That's the Dowager Lady Snuphanuph."

"Is it indeed?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"No less a person, I assure you," said the Master of the Ceremonies. "Hush. Draw a little nearer, Mr. Pickwick. You see the splendidly dressed young man coming this way?"

"The one with the long hair, and the particularly small forehead?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"The same. The richest young man in Ba—ath at this moment. Young Lord Mutanhed."

"You don't say so?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Yes. You'll hear his voice in a moment, Mr. Pickwick. He'll speak to me. The other gentleman with him, in the red under-waistcoat and dark moustache, is the Honorable Mr. Crushton, his bosom friend. How do you do, my lord?"

"Veway hot, Bantam," said his lordship.

"It *is* very warm, my lord," replied the M. C.

"Confounded," assented the Honorable Mr. Crushton.

"Have you seen his lordship's mail-cart, Bantam?" inquired the Honorable Mr. Crushton, after a short pause, during which young Lord Mutanhed had been endeavoring to stare Mr. Pickwick out of countenance, and Mr. Crushton had been reflecting what subject his lordship could talk about best.

"Dear me, no," replied the M. C. "A mail-cart! What an excellent idea! Re—markable!"

"Gwacious heavens!" said his lordship, "I thought evewebody had seen the new mail-cart; it's the neatest, pwettiest, gwacefullest thing that ever wan upon wheels — painted wed, with a cweam piebald."

"With a real box for the letters, and all complete," said the Honorable Mr. Crushton.

"And a little seat in fwont, with an iwon wail, for the dwiver," added his lordship. "I dwove it over to Bwis

tol the other morning, in a cwimson coat, with two servants widing a quarter of a mile behind; and confound me if the people didn't wush out of their cottages, and awest my pwogwess, to know if I wasn't the post. Glorwious, glorwious!"

At this anecdote his lordship laughed very heartily, as did the listeners, of course. Then, drawing his arm through that of the obsequious Mr. Crushton, Lord Mutanhed walked away.

"Delightful young man, his lordship," said the Master of the Ceremonies.

"So I should think," rejoined Mr. Pickwick dryly.

The dancing having commenced, the necessary introductions having been made, and all preliminaries arranged, Angelo Bantam rejoined Mr. Pickwick, and led him into the card-room.

Just at the very moment of their entrance, the Dowager Lady Snuphanuph and two other ladies of an ancient and whist-like appearance, were hovering over an unoccupied card-table; and they no sooner set eyes upon Mr. Pickwick under the convoy of Angelo Bantam, than they exchanged glances with each other, seeing that he was precisely the very person they wanted, to make up the rubber.

"My dear Bantam," said the Dowager Lady Snuphanuph, coaxingly, "find us some nice creature to make up this table; there's a good soul." Mr. Pickwick happened to be looking another way at the moment, so her ladyship nodded her head towards him, and frowned expressively.

"My friend Mr. Pickwick, my lady, will be most happy, I am sure, re—markably so," said the M. C., taking the hint. "Mr. Pickwick, Lady Snuphanuph — Mrs Colonel Wugsby — Miss Bolo."

Mr. Pickwick bowed to each of the ladies, and, finding escape impossible, cut. Mr. Pickwick and Miss Bolo against Lady Snuphanuph and Mrs. Colonel Wugsby.

As the trump card was turned up, at the commencement of the second deal, two young ladies hurried into the room, and took their stations on either side of Mrs. Colonel Wugsby's chair, where they waited patiently until the hand was over.

"Now, Jane," said Mrs. Colonel Wugsby, turning to one of the girls, "what is it?"

"I came to ask, ma, whether I might dance with the youngest Mr. Crawley," whispered the prettier and younger of the two.

"Good God, Jane, how can you think of such things!" replied the mamma, indignantly. "Haven't you repeatedly heard that his father has eight hundred a-year, which dies with him? I am ashamed of you. Not on any account."

"Ma," whispered the other, who was much older than her sister, and very insipid and artificial, "Lord Mutanhed has been introduced to me. I said I *thought* I wasn't engaged, ma."

"You're a sweet pet, my love," replied Mrs. Colonel Wugsby, tapping her daughter's cheek with her fan, "and are always to be trusted. He's immensely rich, my dear. Bless you!" With these words, Mrs. Colonel Wugsby kissed her eldest daughter most affectionately, and frowning in a warning manner upon the other, sorted her cards.

Poor Mr. Pickwick! he had never played with three thorough-paced female card-players before. They were so desperately sharp, that they quite frightened him. If he played a wrong card, Miss Bolo looked a small armory

of daggers ; if he stopped to consider which was the right one, Lady Snuphanuph would throw herself back in her chair, and smile with a mingled glance of impatience and pity to Mrs. Colonel Wugsby : at which Mrs. Colonel Wugsby would shrug up her shoulders, and cough, as much as to say she wondered whether he ever would begin. Then, at the end of every hand, Miss Bolo would inquire with a dismal countenance and reproachful sigh, why Mr. Pickwick had not returned that diamond, or led the club, or roughed the spade, or finessed the heart, or led through the honor, or brought out the ace, or played up to the king, or some such thing; and in reply to all these grave charges, Mr. Pickwick would be wholly unable to plead any justification whatever; having by this time forgotten all about the game. People came and looked on, too, which made Mr. Pickwick nervous. Besides all this, there was a great deal of distracting conversation near the table, between Angelo Bantam and the two Miss Matinters, who, being single and singular, paid great court to the Master of the Ceremonies, in the hope of getting a stray partner now and then. All these things, combined with the noises and interruptions of constant comings in and goings out, made Mr. Pickwick play rather badly ; the cards were against him, also ; and when they left off at ten minutes past eleven, Miss Bolo rose from the table considerably agitated, and went straight home, in a flood of tears, and a sedan chair.

Being joined by his friends, who one and all protested that they had scarcely ever spent a more pleasant evening, Mr. Pickwick accompanied them to the White Hart, and having soothed his feelings with something hot, went to bed, and to sleep, almost simultaneously.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE CHIEF FEATURES OF WHICH, WILL BE FOUND TO BE AN AUTHENTIC VERSION OF THE LEGEND OF PRINCE BLADUD, AND A MOST EXTRAORDINARY CALAMITY THAT BEFELL MR. WINKLE.

As Mr. Pickwick contemplated a stay of at least two months in Bath, he deemed it advisable to take private lodgings for himself and friends for that period; and as a favorable opportunity offered for their securing, on moderate terms, the upper portion of a house in the Royal Crescent, which was larger than they required, Mr. and Mrs. Dowler offered to relieve them of a bedroom and sitting-room. This proposition was at once accepted, and in three days' time they were all located in their new abode, when Mr. Pickwick began to drink the waters with the utmost assiduity. Mr. Pickwick took them systematically. He drank a quarter of a pint before breakfast, and then walked up a hill; and another quarter of a pint after breakfast, and then walked down a hill; and after every fresh quarter of a pint, Mr. Pickwick declared, in the most solemn and emphatic terms, that he felt a great deal better: whereat his friends were very much delighted, though they had not been previously aware that there was anything the matter with him.

The great pump-room is a spacious saloon, ornamented with Corinthian pillars, and a music-gallery, and a Tompion clock, and a statue of Nash, and a golden inscription, to which all the water-drinkers should attend, for it appeals to them in the cause of a deserving charity. There is a large bar with a marble vase, out of which the pumper gets the water; and there are a number of yellow-looking tumblers, out of which the company get it; and it is a most edifying and satisfactory sight to behold the perseverance and gravity with which they swallow it. There are baths near at hand, in which a part of the company wash themselves; and a band plays afterwards, to congratulate the remainder on their having done so. There is another pump-room, into which infirm ladies and gentlemen are wheeled, in such an astonishing variety of chairs and chaises, that any adventurous individual who goes in with the regular number of toes, is in imminent danger of coming out without them; and there is a third, into which the quiet people go, for it is less noisy than either. There is an immensity of promenading, on crutches and off: with sticks and without: and a great deal of conversation, and liveliness, and pleasantry.

Every morning, the regular water-drinkers, Mr. Pickwick among the number, met each other in the pump-room, took their quarter of a pint, and walked constitutionally. At the afternoon's promenade, Lord Mutanhed, and the Honorable Mr. Crushton, the Dowager Lady Snuphanuph, Mrs. Colonel Wugsby, and all the great people, and all the morning water-drinkers, met in grand assemblage. After this, they walked out, or drove out, or were pushed out in bath-chairs, and met one another again. After this, the gentlemen went to the

reading-rooms and met divisions of the mass. After this, they went home. If it were theatre night, perhaps they met at the theatre; if it were assembly night, they met at the rooms; and if it were neither, they met the next day—a very pleasant routine, with perhaps a slight tinge of sameness.

Mr. Pickwick was sitting up by himself, after a day spent in this manner, making entries in his journal: his friends having retired to bed: when he was roused by a gentle tap at the room-door.

"Beg your pardon, sir," said Mrs. Craddock, the landlady, peeping in; "but *did* you want anything more, sir?"

"Nothing more, ma'am," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"My young girl is gone to bed, sir;" said Mrs. Craddock, "and Mr. Dowler is good enough to say that he'll sit up for Mrs. Dowler, as the party isn't expected to be over till late; so I was thinking that if you wanted nothing more, Mr. Pickwick, I would go to bed."

"By all means, ma'am," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"Wish you good-night, sir," said Mrs. Craddock.

"Good-night, ma'am," rejoined Mr. Pickwick.

Mrs. Craddock closed the door, and Mr. Pickwick resumed his writing.

In half an hour's time the entries were concluded. Mr. Pickwick carefully rubbed the last page on the blotting-paper, shut up the book, wiped his pen on the bottom of the inside of his coat-tail, and opened the drawer of the inkstand to put it carefully away. There were a couple of sheets of writing-paper, pretty closely written over, in the inkstand drawer, and they were folded so, that the title, which was in a good round hand, was fully disclosed to him. Seeing from this that it was no private

document: and as it seemed to relate to Bath, and was very short: Mr. Pickwick unfolded it, lighted his bedroom candle that it might burn up well by the time he finished; and drawing his chair nearer the fire, read as follows:

THE TRUE LEGEND OF PRINCE BLADUD.

"Less than two hundred years agone, on one of the public baths in this city, there appeared an inscription in honor of its mighty founder, the renowned Prince Bladud. That inscription is now erased.

"For many hundred years before that time, there had been handed down, from age to age, an old legend, that the illustrious Prince being afflicted with leprosy, on his return from reaping a rich harvest of knowledge in ancient Athens, shunned the court of his royal father, and consorted moodily with husbandmen and pigs. Among the herd (so said the legend) was a pig of grave and solemn countenance, with whom the Prince had a fellow feeling — for he too was wise — a pig of thoughtful and reserved demeanor; an animal superior to his fellows, whose grunt was terrible, and whose bite was sharp. The young Prince sighed deeply as he looked upon the countenance of the majestic swine; he thought of his royal father, and his eyes were bedewed with tears.

"This sagacious pig was fond of bathing in rich moist mud. Not in summer, as common pigs do, now, to cool themselves, and did even in those distant ages (which is a proof that the light of civilization had already begun to dawn, though feebly), but in the cold sharp days of win-

ter. His coat was ever so sleek, and his complexion so clear, that the Prince resolved to essay the purifying qualities of the same water that his friend resorted to. He made the trial. Beneath that black mud, bubbled the hot springs of Bath. He washed, and was cured. Hastening to his father's court, he paid his best respects, and returned quickly hither, founded this city, and its famous baths.

"He sought the pig with all the ardor of their early friendship — but, alas! the waters had been his death. He had imprudently taken a bath at too high a temperature, and the natural philosopher was no more! He was succeeded by Pliny, who also fell a victim to his thirst for knowledge.

"This *was* the legend. Listen to the true one.

"A great many centuries since, there flourished, in great state, the famous and renowned Lud Hudibras, king of Britain. He was a mighty monarch. The earth shook when he walked: he was so very stout. His people basked in the light of his countenance: it was so red and glowing. He was, indeed, every inch a king. And there were a good many inches of him, too, for although he was not very tall, he was a remarkable size round, and the inches that he wanted in height, he made up in circumference. If any degenerate monarch of modern times could be in any way compared with him, I should say the venerable King Cole would be that illustrious potentate.

"This good king had a queen, who, eighteen years before, had had a son, who was called Bladud. He was sent to a preparatory seminary in his father's dominions until he was ten years old, and was then despatched, in charge of a trusty messenger, to a finishing school at

Athens; and as there was no extra charge for remaining during the holidays, and no notice required previous to the removal of a pupil, there he remained for eight long years, at the expiration of which time, the king his father sent the lord chamberlain over, to settle the bill, and to bring him home: which, the lord chamberlain doing, was received with shouts, and pensioned immediately.

"When King Lud saw the Prince, his son, and found he had grown up such a fine young man, he perceived at once what a grand thing it would be to have him married without delay, so that his children might be the means of perpetuating the glorious race of Lud, down to the very latest ages of the world. With this view, he sent a special embassy, composed of great noblemen who had nothing particular to do, and wanted lucrative employment, to a neighboring king, and demanded his fair daughter in marriage for his son: stating at the same time that he was anxious to be on the most affectionate terms with his brother and friend, but that if they couldn't agree in arranging this marriage, he should be under the unpleasant necessity of invading his kingdom, and putting his eyes out. To this, the other king (who was the weaker of the two) replied, that he was very much obliged to his friend and brother for all his goodness and magnanimity, and that his daughter was quite ready to be married, whenever Prince Bladud liked to come and fetch her.

"This answer no sooner reached Britain, than the whole nation were transported with joy. Nothing was heard, on all sides, but the sounds of feasting and revelry, — except the chinking of money as it was paid in by the people to the collector of the Royal Treasures, to defray

the expenses of the happy ceremony. It was upon this occasion that King Lud, seated on the top of his throne in full council, rose, in the exuberance of his feelings, and commanded the lord chief justice to order in the richest wines and the court minstrels: an act of graciousness which has been, through the ignorance of traditionary historians, attributed to King Cole, in those celebrated lines in which his majesty is represented as

> Calling for his pipe, and calling for his pot,
> And calling for his fiddlers three.

Which is an obvious injustice to the memory of King Lud, and a dishonest exaltation of the virtues of King Cole.

"But, in the midst of all this festivity and rejoicing, there was one individual present, who tasted not when the sparkling wines were poured forth, and who danced not, when the minstrels played. This was no other than Prince Bladud himself, in honor of whose happiness a whole people were at that very moment straining alike their throats and purse-strings. The truth was, that the Prince, forgetting the undoubted right of the minister for foreign affairs to fall in love on his behalf, had, contrary to every precedent of policy and diplomacy, already fallen in love on his own account, and privately contracted himself unto the fair daughter of a noble Athenian.

"Here we have a striking example of one of the manifold advantages of civilization and refinement. If the Prince had lived in later days, he might at once have married the object of his father's choice and then set himself seriously to work, to relieve himself of the burden which rested heavily upon him. He might have endeavored to break her heart by a systematic course of

insult and neglect; or, if the spirit of her sex, and a proud consciousness of her many wrongs had upheld her under this ill-treatment, he might have sought to take her life, and so get rid of her effectually. But neither mode of relief suggested itself to Prince Bladud; so he solicited a private audience and told his father.

"It is an old prerogative of kings to govern everything but their passions. King Lud flew into a frightful rage, tossed his crown up to the ceiling, and caught it again — for in those days kings kept their crowns on their heads, and not in the Tower — stamped the ground, rapped his forehead, wondered why his own flesh and blood rebelled against him, and, finally, calling in his guards, ordered the Prince away to instant confinement in a lofty turret; a course of treatment which the kings of old very generally pursued towards their sons, when their matrimonial inclinations did not happen to point to the same quarter as their own.

"When Prince Bladud had been shut up in the lofty turret for the greater part of a year, with no better prospect before his bodily eyes than a stone wall, or before his mental vision than prolonged imprisonment, he naturally began to ruminate on a plan of escape, which, after months of preparation, he managed to accomplish; considerately leaving his dinner knife in the heart of his jailer, lest the poor fellow (who had a family) should be considered privy to his flight, and punished accordingly by the infuriated king.

"The monarch was frantic at the loss of his son. He knew not on whom to vent his grief and wrath, until fortunately bethinking himself of the Lord Chamberlain who had brought him home, he struck off his pension and his head together.

"Meanwhile, the young Prince, effectually disguised, wandered on foot through his father's dominions, cheered and supported in all his hardships by sweet thoughts of the Athenian maid, who was the innocent cause of his weary trials. One day he stopped to rest in a country village; and seeing that there were gay dances going forward on the green, and gay faces passing to and fro, ventured to inquire of a reveller who stood near him, the reason for this rejoicing.

"'Know you not, O stranger,' was the reply, 'of the recent proclamation of our gracious king?'

"'Proclamation! No. What proclamation?' rejoined the Prince — for he had travelled along the by and little-frequented ways, and knew nothing of what had passed upon the public roads, such as they were.

"'Why,' replied the peasant, 'the foreign lady that our Prince wished to wed, is married to a foreign noble of her own country; and the king proclaims the fact, and a great public festival besides; for now, of course, Prince Bladud will come back and marry the lady his father chose, who they say is as beautiful as the noon-day sun. Your health, sir. God save the King!'

"The Prince remained to hear no more. He fled from the spot, and plunged into the thickest recesses of a neighboring wood. On, on, he wandered, night and day: beneath the blazing sun, and the cold pale moon: through the dry heat of noon, and the damp cold of night: in the gray light of morn, and the red glare of eve. So heedless was he of time or object, that being bound for Athens, he wandered as far out of his way as Bath.

"There was no city where Bath stands, then. There was no vestige of human habitation, or sign of man's

resort, to bear the name; but there was the same noble country, the same broad expanse of hill and dale, the same beautiful channel stealing on, far away: the same lofty mountains which, like the troubles of life, viewed at a distance, and partially obscured by the bright mist of its morning, lose their ruggedness and asperity, and seem all ease and softness. Moved by the gentle beauty of the scene, the Prince sank upon the green turf, and bathed his swollen feet in his tears.

"'Oh!' said the unhappy Bladud, clasping his hands, and mournfully raising his eyes towards the sky, 'would that my wanderings might end here; would that these grateful tears with which I now mourn hope misplaced, and love despised, might flow in peace forever!'

"The wish was heard. It was in the time of the heathen deities, who used occasionally to take people at their words, with a promptness, in some cases, extremely awkward. The ground opened beneath the Prince's feet; he sunk into the chasm; and instantaneously it closed upon his head forever, save where his hot tears welled up through the earth, and where they have continued to gush forth ever since.

"It is observable that, to this day, large numbers of elderly ladies and gentlemen who have been disappointed in procuring partners, and almost as many young ones who are anxious to obtain them, repair, annually, to Bath to drink the waters, from which they derive much strength and comfort. This is most complimentary to the virtue of Prince Bladud's tears, and strongly corroborative of the veracity of this legend."

Mr. Pickwick yawned, several times, when he had arrived at the end of this little manuscript: carefully

refolded, and replaced it, in the inkstand drawer: and then, with a countenance expressive of the utmost weariness, lighted his chamber candle, and went up-stairs to bed.

He stopped at Mr. Dowler's door, according to custom, and knocked to say good-night.

"Ah!" said Dowler, "going to bed? I wish I was. Dismal night. Windy; isn't it?"

"Very," said Mr. Pickwick. "Good-night."

"Good-night."

Mr. Pickwick went to his bedchamber, and Mr. Dowler resumed his seat before the fire, in fulfilment of his rash promise to sit up till his wife came home.

There are few things more worrying than sitting up for somebody, especially if that somebody be at a party. You cannot help thinking how quickly the time passes with them, which drags so heavily with you; and the more you think of this, the more your hopes of their speedy arrival decline. Clocks tick so loud, too, when you are sitting up alone, and you seem as if you had an under-garment of cobwebs on. First, something tickles your right knee, and then the same sensation irritates your left. You have no sooner changed your position, than it comes again in the arms; and when you have fidgeted your limbs into all sorts of odd shapes, you have a sudden relapse in the nose, which you rub as if to rub it off — as there is no doubt you would, if you could. Eyes, too, are mere personal inconveniences; and the wick of one candle gets an inch and a half long, while you are snuffing the other. These, and various other little nervous annoyances, render sitting up, for a length of time, after everybody else has gone to bed, anything but a cheerful amusement.

This was just Mr. Dowler's opinion, as he sat before the fire, and felt honestly indignant with all the inhuman people at the party, who were keeping him up. He was not put into better humor either, by the reflection that he had taken it into his head, early in the evening, to think he had got an ache there, and so stopped at home. At length, after several droppings asleep, and fallings forward towards the bars, and catchings backward soon enough to prevent being branded in the face, Mr. Dowler made up his mind that he would throw himself on the bed in the back-room and *think* — not sleep, of course.

"I'm a heavy sleeper," said Mr. Dowler, as he flung himself on the bed. "I must keep awake; I suppose I shall hear a knock here. Yes. I thought so. I can hear the watchman. There he goes. Fainter now though. A little fainter. He's turning the corner. Ah!" When Mr. Dowler arrived at this point, *he* turned the corner at which he had been long hesitating, and fell fast asleep.

Just as the clock struck three, there was blown into the Crescent a sedan-chair, with Mrs. Dowler inside: borne by one short fat chairman, and one long thin one, who had had much ado, all the way, to keep their bodies perpendicular: to say nothing of the chair; but on that high ground, and in the Crescent, which the wind swept round and round as if it were going to tear the paving-stones up, its fury was tremendous. They were very glad to set the chair down, and give a good round loud double knock at the street-door.

They waited some time, but nobody came.

"Servants is in the arms o' Porpus, I think," said the short chairman, warming his hands at the attendant link-boy's torch.

"I wish he'd give 'em a squeeze and wake 'em," observed the long one.

"Knock again, will you, if you please," cried Mrs. Dowler from the chair. "Knock two or three times, if you please."

The short man was quite willing to get the job over, as soon as possible; so he stood on the step, and gave four or five most startling double knocks, of eight or ten knocks apiece: while the long man went into the road, and looked up at the windows for a light.

Nobody came. It was all as silent and as dark as ever.

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Dowler. "You must knock again, if you please."

"There a'n't a bell, is there, ma'am?" said the short chairman.

"Yes, there is," interposed the linkboy, "I've been a-ringing at it ever so long."

"It's only a handle," said Mrs. Dowler, "the wire's broken."

"I wish the servants' heads was," growled the long man.

"I must trouble you to knock again, if you please," said Mrs. Dowler with the utmost politeness.

The short man did knock again several times, without producing the smallest effect. The tall man, growing very impatient, then relieved him, and kept on perpetually knocking double-knocks of two loud knocks each, like an insane postman.

At length Mr. Winkle began to dream that he was at a club, and that the members being very refractory, the chairman was obliged to hammer the table a good deal to preserve order; then, he had a confused notion of an

auction-room where there were no bidders, and the auctioneer was buying everything in; and ultimately he began to think it just within the bounds of possibility that somebody might be knocking at the street-door. To make quite certain, however, he remained quiet in bed for ten minutes or so, and listened; and when he had counted two or three and thirty knocks, he felt quite satisfied, and gave himself a great deal of credit for being so wakeful.

"Rap rap — rap rap — rap rap — ra, ra, ra, ra, ra, rap!" went the knocker.

Mr. Winkle jumped out of bed, wondering very much what could possibly be the matter, and hastily putting on his stockings and slippers, folded his dressing-gown round him, lighted a flat candle from the rush light that was burning in the fireplace, and hurried down-stairs.

"Here's somebody comin' at last, ma'am," said the short chairman.

"I wish I wos behind him vith a brad-awl," muttered the long one.

"Who's there?" cried Mr. Winkle, undoing the chain.

"Don't stop to ask questions, cast-iron head," replied the long man, with great disgust; taking it for granted that the inquirer was a footman; "but open the door."

"Come, look sharp, timber eyelids," added the other, encouragingly.

Mr. Winkle, being half asleep, obeyed the command mechanically, opened the door a little, and peeped out. The first thing he saw, was the red glare of the link-boy's torch. Startled by the sudden fear that the house might be on fire, he hastily threw the door wide open, and holding the candle above his head, stared eagerly before him, not quite certain whether what he saw was a

sedan-chair or a fire-engine. At this instant there came a violent gust of wind; the light was blown out; Mr. Winkle felt himself irresistibly impelled on to the steps; and the door blew to, with a loud crash.

"Well, young man, now you *have* done it!" said the short chairman.

Mr. Winkle, catching sight of a lady's face at the window of the sedan, turned hastily round, plied the knocker with all his might and main, and called frantically upon the chairman to take the chair away again.

"Take it away, take it away," cried Mr. Winkle. "Here's somebody coming out of another house; put me into the chair. Hide me — do something with me!"

All this time he was shivering with cold; and every time he raised his hand to the knocker, the wind took the dressing-gown in a most unpleasant manner.

"The people are coming down the Crescent now. There are ladies with 'em; cover me up with something. Stand before me!" roared Mr. Winkle. But the chairmen were too much exhausted with laughing to afford him the slightest assistance, and the ladies were every moment approaching nearer and nearer.

Mr. Winkle gave a last hopeless knock; the ladies were only a few doors off. He threw away the extinguished candle, which, all this time, he had held above his head, and fairly bolted into the sedan-chair where Mrs. Dowler was.

Now, Mrs. Craddock had heard the knocking and the voices at last; and, only waiting to put something smarter on her head than her nightcap, ran down into the front drawing-room to make sure that it was the right party. Throwing up the window-sash as Mr. Winkle was rush-

ing into the chair, she no sooner caught sight of what was going forward below, than she raised a vehement and dismal shriek, and implored Mr. Dowler to get up directly, for his wife was running away with another gentleman.

Upon this, Mr. Dowler bounced off the bed as ab ruptly as an India-rubber ball, and rushing into the front room, arrived at one window just as Mr. Pickwick threw up the other: when the first object that met the gaze of both, was Mr. Winkle bolting into the sedan-chair.

"Watchman," shouted Dowler furiously; "stop him — hold him — keep him tight — shut him in, till I come down. I'll cut his throat — give me a knife — from ear to ear, Mrs. Craddock. I will!" And, breaking from the shrieking landlady, and from Mr. Pickwick, the indignant husband seized a small supper-knife, and tore into the street.

But Mr. Winkle didn't wait for him. He no sooner heard the horrible threat of the valorous Dowler, than he bounced out of the sedan, quite as quickly as he had bounced in, and throwing off his slippers into the road, took to his heels and tore round the Crescent, hotly pursued by Dowler and the watchman. He kept ahead; the door was open as he came round the second time; he rushed in, slammed it in Dowler's face, mounted to his bedroom, locked the door, piled a wash-hand-stand, chest of drawers, and table against it, and packed up a few necessaries ready for flight with the first ray of morning.

Dowler came up to the outside of the door; avowed, through the key-hole, his steadfast determination of cutting Mr. Winkle's throat next day; and, after a great

confusion of voices in the drawing-room, amidst which that of Mr. Pickwick was distinctly heard endeavoring to make peace, the inmates dispersed to their several bedchambers, and all was quiet once more.

It is not unlikely that the inquiry may be made, where Mr. Weller was, all this time? We will state where he was, in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

HONORABLY ACCOUNTS FOR MR. WELLER'S ABSENCE, BY DESCRIBING A SOIREE TO WHICH HE WAS INVITED AND WENT; ALSO RELATES HOW HE WAS INTRUSTED BY MR. PICKWICK WITH A PRIVATE MISSION OF DELICACY AND IMPORTANCE.

"MR. WELLER," said Mrs. Craddock, upon the morning of this very eventful day, "here's a letter for you."

"Wery odd that," said Sam, "I'm afeerd there must be somethin' the matter, for I don't recollect any gen'l'm'n in my circle of acquaintance as is capable o' writin' one."

"Perhaps something uncommon has taken place," observed Mrs. Craddock.

"It must be somethin' wery uncommon indeed, as could perduce a letter out o' any friend o' mine," replied Sam, shaking his head dubiously; "nothin' less than a nat'ral conwulsion, as the young gen'l'm'n observed ven he wos took with fits. It can't be from the gov'ner," said Sam, looking at the direction. "He always prints, I know, 'cos he learnt writin' from the large bills in the bookin' offices. It's a wery strange thing now, where this here letter can ha' come from."

As Sam said this, he did what a great many people do when they are uncertain about the writer of a note, — looked at the seal, and then at the front, and then at

the back, and then at the sides, and then at the superscription; and, as a last resource, thought perhaps he might as well look at the inside, and try to find out from that.

"It's wrote on gilt-edged paper," said Sam, as he unfolded it, "and sealed in bronze vax vith the top of a door-key. Now for it." And, with a very grave face, Mr. Weller slowly read as follows:

"A select company of the Bath footmen presents their compliments to Mr. Weller, and requests the pleasure of his company this evening, to a friendly swarry, consisting of a boiled leg of mutton with the usual trimmings. The swarry to be on table at half-past nine o'clock punctually."

This was enclosed in another note, which ran thus —

"Mr. John Smauker, the gentleman who had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Weller at the house of their mutual acquaintance, Mr. Bantam, a few days since, begs to enclose Mr. Weller the herewith invitation. If Mr. Weller will call on Mr. John Smauker at nine o'clock, Mr. John Smauker will have the pleasure of introducing Mr. Weller.

(Signed) "JOHN SMAUKER."

The envelope was directed to blank Weller, Esq., at Mr. Pickwick's; and in a parenthesis, in the left hand corner, were the words "airy bell," as an instruction to the bearer.

"Vell," said Sam, "this is comin' it raythe powerful, this is. I never heerd a b'iled leg o' mutton called a swarry afore. I wonder wot they'd call a roast one."

However, without waiting to debate the point, Sam at

once betook himself into the presence of Mr. Pickwick, and requested leave of absence for that evening, which was readily granted. With this permission, and the street-door key, Sam Weller issued forth a little before the appointed time, and strolled leisurely towards Queen Square, which he no sooner gained than he had the satisfaction of beholding Mr. John Smauker leaning his powdered head against a lamp-post at a short distance off, smoking a cigar through an amber tube.

"How do you do, Mr. Weller?" said Mr. John Smauker, raising his hat gracefully with one hand, while he gently waved the other in a condescending manner. "How do you do, sir?"

"Why, reasonably convalescent," replied Sam. "How do *you* find yourself, my dear feller?"

"Only so so," said Mr. John Smauker.

"Ah, you've been a-workin' too hard," observed Sam. "I was fearful you would; it won't do, you know; you must not give way to that 'ere uncompromisin' spirit o' yourn."

"It's not so much that, Mr. Weller," replied Mr. John Smauker, "as bad wine; I'm afraid I've been dissipating."

"Oh! that's it, is it?" said Sam; "that's a wery bad complaint, that."

"And yet the temptation, you see, Mr. Weller," observed Mr. John Smauker.

"Ah, to be sure," said Sam.

"Plunged into the very vortex of society, you know, Mr. Weller," said Mr. John Smauker, with a sigh.

"Dreadful indeed!" rejoined Sam.

"But it's always the way," said Mr. John Smauker;

"if your destiny leads you into public life, and public station, you must expect to be subjected to temptations which other people is free from, Mr. Weller."

"Precisely what my uncle said, ven *he* vent into the public line," remarked Sam, "and wery right the old gen'l'm'n wos, for he drank hisself to death in somethin' less than a quarter."

Mr. John Smauker looked deeply indignant at any parallel being drawn between himself and the deceased gentleman in question; but as Sam's face was in the most immovable state of calmness, he thought better of it, and looked affable again.

"Perhaps we had better be walking," said Mr. Smauker, consulting a copper timepiece which dwelt at the bottom of a deep watch-pocket, and was raised to the surface by means of a black string, with a copper key at the other end.

"P'raps we had," replied Sam, "or they'll overdo the swarry, and that'll spile it."

"Have you drank the waters, Mr. Weller?" inquired his companion, as they walked towards High Street.

"Once," replied Sam.

"What did you think of 'em, sir?"

"I thought they wos particklery unpleasant," replied Sam.

"Ah," said Mr. John Smauker, "you disliked the killibeate taste, perhaps?"

"I don't know much about that 'ere," said Sam. "I thought they'd a wery strong flavor o' warm flat-irons."

"That *is* the killibeate, Mr. Weller," observed Mr. John Smauker, contemptuously.

"Well, if it is, it's a wery inexpressive word, that's all," said Sam. "It may be, but I a'n't much in the

chimical line myself, so I can't say." And here, to the great horror of Mr. John Smauker, Sam Weller began to whistle.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Weller," said Mr. John Smauker, agonized at the exceedingly ungenteel sound. "Will you take my arm?"

"Thankee, you're wery good, but I won't deprive you of it," replied Sam. "I've rayther a way o' puttin' my hands in my pockets, if it's all the same to you." As Sam said this, he suited the action to the word, and whistled far louder than before.

"This way," said his new friend, apparently much relieved as they turned down a by-street; "we shall soon be there."

"Shall we?" said Sam, quite unmoved by the announcement of his close vicinity to the select footmen of Bath.

"Yes," said Mr. John Smauker. "Don't be alarmed, Mr. Weller."

"Oh no," said Sam.

"You'll see some very handsome uniforms, Mr. Weller," continued Mr. John Smauker; "and perhaps you'll find some of the gentlemen rather high at first, you know, but they'll soon come round."

"That's wery kind on 'em," replied Sam.

"And you know," resumed Mr. John Smauker, with an air of sublime protection; "you know, as you're a stranger, perhaps they'll be rather hard upon you at first."

"They won't be wery cruel, though, will they?" inquired Sam.

"No, no," replied Mr. John Smauker, pulling forth the fox's head, and taking a gentlemanly pinch. "There

are some funny dogs among us, and they will have their joke, you know; but you mustn't mind 'em, you mustn't mind 'em."

"I'll try and bear up ag'in' such a reg'lar knock down o' talent," replied Sam.

"That's right," said Mr. John Smauker, putting up the fox's head, and elevating his own; "I'll stand by you."

By this time they had reached a small greengrocer's shop, which Mr. John Smauker entered, followed by Sam: who, the moment he got behind him, relapsed into a series of the very broadest and most unmitigated grins, and manifested other demonstrations of being in a highly enviable state of inward merriment.

Crossing the greengrocer's shop, and putting their hats on the stairs in the little passage behind it, they walked into a small parlor; and here the full splendor of the scene burst upon Mr. Weller's view.

A couple of tables were put together in the middle of the parlor, covered with three or four cloths of different ages and dates of washing, arranged to look as much like one as the circumstances of the case would allow. Upon these, were laid knives and forks for six or eight people. Some of the knife handles were green, others red, and a few yellow; and as all the forks were black, the combination of colors was exceedingly striking. Plates for a corresponding number of guests were warming behind the fender; and the guests themselves were warming before it: the chief and most important of whom appeared to be a stoutish gentleman in a bright crimson coat with long tails, vividly red breeches, and a cocked hat, who was standing with his back to the fire, and had apparently just entered, for besides retaining

his cocked hat on his head, he carried in his hand a high stick, such as gentlemen of his profession usually elevate in a sloping position over the roofs of carriages.

"Smauker, my lad — your fin," said the gentleman with the cocked hat.

Mr. Smauker dovetailed the top joint of his right hand little finger into that of the gentleman with the cocked hat, and said he was charmed to see him looking so well.

"Well, they tell me I am looking pretty blooming," said the man with the cocked hat, "and it's a wonder, too. I've been following our old woman about, two hours a-day, for the last fortnight; and if a constant contemplation of the manner in which she hooks-and-eyes that infernal lavender-colored old gown of hers behind, isn't enough to throw anybody into a low state of despondency for life, stop my quarter's salary."

At this, the assembled selections laughed very heartily; and one gentleman in a yellow waistcoat, with a coach trimming border, whispered a neighbor in green-foil smalls, that Tuckle was in spirits to-night.

"By the by," said Mr. Tuckle, "Smauker, my boy, you ——" The remainder of the sentence was forwarded into Mr. John Smauker's ear, by whisper.

"Oh, dear me, I quite forgot," said Mr. John Smauker. "Gentlemen, my friend Mr. Weller."

"Sorry to keep the fire off you, Weller," said Mr. Tuckle, with a familiar nod. "Hope you're not cold, Weller."

"Not by no means, Blazes," replied Sam. "It 'ud be a wery chilly subject as felt cold wen you stood opposit. You'd save coals if they put you behind the fender in the wa'tin' room at a public office, you would."

As this retort appeared to convey rather a personal allusion to Mr. Tuckle's crimson livery, that gentleman looked majestic for a few seconds, but gradually edging away from the fire, broke into a forced smile, and said it wasn't bad.

"Wery much obliged for your good opinion, sir," replied Sam. "We shall get on by degrees, I des-say. We'll try a better one, by and by."

At this point the conversation was interrupted by the arrival of a gentleman in orange-colored plush, accompanied by another selection in purple cloth, with a great extent of stocking. The new comers having been welcomed by the old ones, Mr. Tuckle put the question that supper be ordered in, which was carried unanimously.

The greengrocer and his wife then arranged upon the table a boiled leg of mutton, hot, with caper sauce, turnips, and potatoes. Mr. Tuckle took the chair, and was supported at the other end of the board by the gentleman in orange plush. The greengrocer put on a pair of wash-leather gloves to hand the plates with, and stationed himself behind Mr. Tuckle's chair.

"Harris," said Mr. Tuckle, in a commanding tone.

"Sir," said the greengrocer.

"Have you got your gloves on?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then take the kiver off."

"Yes, sir."

The greengrocer did as he was told, with a show of great humility, and obsequiously handed Mr. Tuckle the carving knife; in doing which, he accidentally gaped.

"What do you mean by that, sir?" said Mr. Tuckle, with great asperity.

"I beg your pardon, sir," replied the crest-fallen greengrocer, "I didn't mean to do it, sir; I was up very late last night, sir."

"I tell you what my opinion of you is, Harris," said Mr. Tuckle, with a most impressive air, "you're a wulgar beast."

"I hope, gentlemen," said Harris, "that you won't be severe with me, gentlemen. I'm very much obliged to you indeed, gentlemen, for your patronage, and also for your recommendations, gentlemen, whenever additional assistance in waiting is required. I hope, gentlemen, I give satisfaction."

"No, you don't, sir," said Mr. Tuckle. "Very far from it, sir."

"We consider you an inattentive reskel," said the gentleman in the orange plush.

"And a low thief," added the gentleman in the green-foil smalls.

"And an unreclaimable blaygaird," added the gentleman in purple.

The poor greengrocer bowed very humbly while these little epithets were bestowed upon him, in the true spirit of the very smallest tyranny; and when everybody had said something to show his superiority, Mr. Tuckle proceeded to carve the leg of mutton, and to help the company.

This important business of the evening had hardly commenced, when the door was thrown briskly open, and another gentleman in a light-blue suit, and leaden buttons, made his appearance.

"Against the rules," said Mr. Tuckle. "Too late, too late."

"No, no; positively I couldn't help it," said the gentleman in blue. "I appeal to the company — an affair of gallantry now — an app'intment at the theayter."

"Oh, that indeed," said the gentleman in the orange plush.

"Yes; raly now, honor bright," said the man in blue. "I made a promise to fetch our youngest daughter at half-past ten, and she is such an uncauminly fine gal, that I raly hadn't the art to disapp'int her. No offence to the present company, sir, but a petticut, sir, — a petticut, sir, is irrevokable."

"I begin to suspect there's something in that quarter," said Tuckle, as the new comer took his seat next Sam. "I've remarked, once or twice, that she leans very heavy on your shoulder when she gets in and out of the carriage."

"Oh raly, raly, Tuckle, you shouldn't," said the man in blue. "It's not fair. I may have said to one or two friends that she was a very divine creechure, and had refused one or two offers without any hobvus cause, but — no, no, no, indeed, Tuckle — before strangers, too — it's not right — you shouldn't. Delicacy, my dear friend, delicacy!" And the man in blue, pulling up his neckerchief, and adjusting his coat cuffs, nodded and frowned as if there were more behind, which he could say if he liked, but was bound in honor to suppress.

The man in blue being a light-haired, stiff-necked, free and easy sort of footman, with a swaggering air and pert face, had attracted Mr. Weller's especial attention at first, but when he began to come out in this way, Sam felt more than ever disposed to cultivate his acquaintance; so he launched himself into the conversation at once with characteristic independence.

"Your health, sir," said Sam. "I like your conwersation much. I think it's wery pretty."

At this the man in blue smiled, as if it were a compliment he was well used to; but looked approvingly on Sam at the same time, and said he hoped he should be better acquainted with him, for without any flattery at all he seemed to have the makings of a very nice fellow about him — just the man after his own heart.

"You're wery good, sir," said Sam. "What a lucky feller you are!"

"How do you mean?" inquired the gentleman in blue.

"That 'ere young lady," replied Sam. "She knows wot's wot, she does. Ah, I see." Mr. Weller closed one eye, and shook his head from side to side, in a manner which was highly gratifying to the personal vanity of the gentleman in blue.

"I'm afraid you're a cunning fellow, Mr. Weller," said that individual.

"No, no," said Sam. "I leave all that 'ere to you. It's a great deal more in your way than mine, as the gen'l'm'n on the right side of the garden vall said to the man on the wrong 'un, ven the mad bull wos a comin' up the lane."

"Well, well, Mr. Weller," said the gentleman in blue, "I think she has remarked my air and manner, Mr. Weller."

"I should think she couldn't wery well be off o' that," said Sam.

"Have you any little thing of that kind in hand, sir?" inquired the favored gentleman in blue, drawing a toothpick from his waistcoat pocket.

"Not exactly," said Sam. "There's no daughters at

my place, else o' course I should ha' made up to vun on 'em. As it is, I don't think I can do vith anythin' under a female markis. I might take up with a young ooman o' large property as hadn't a title, if she made wery fierce love to me — not else."

"Of course not, Mr. Weller," said the gentleman in blue, "one can't be troubled, you know; and *we* know, Mr. Weller — we, who are men of the world — that a good uniform must work its way with the women, sooner or later. In fact, that's the only thing, between you and me, that makes the service worth entering into."

"Just so," said Sam. "That's it, o' course."

When this confidential dialogue had gone thus far, glasses were placed round, and every gentleman ordered what he liked best, before the public house shut up. The gentleman in blue, and the man in orange, who were the chief exquisites of the party, ordered "cold srub and water," but with the others, gin and water, sweet, appeared to be the favorite beverage. Sam called the greengrocer a "desp'rate willin," and ordered a large bowl of punch — two circumstances which seemed to raise him very much in the opinion of the selections.

"Gentlemen," said the man in blue, with an air of the most consummate dandyism, "I'll give you the ladies; come."

"Hear, hear!" said Sam. "The young missises."

Here there was a loud cry of "Order," and Mr. John Smauker, as the gentleman who had introduced Mr. Weller into that company, begged to inform him that the word he had just made use of, was unparliamentary.

"Which word was that 'ere, sir?" inquired Sam.

"Missises, sir," replied Mr. John Smauker, with an

alarming frown. "We don't recognize such distinctions here."

"Oh, wery good," said Sam; "then I'll amend the observation, and call 'em the dear creeturs, if Blazes vill allow me."

Some doubt appeared to exist in the mind of the gentleman in the green-foil smalls, whether the chairman could be legally appealed to, as "Blazes," but as the company seemed more disposed to stand upon their own rights than his, the question was not raised. The man with the cocked-hat, breathed short, and looked long at Sam, but apparently thought it as well to say nothing, in case he should get the worst of it.

After a short silence, a gentleman in an embroidered coat reaching down to his heels, and a waistcoat of the same which kept one half of his legs warm, stirred his gin and water with great energy, and putting himself upon his feet, all at once, by a violent effort, said he was desirous of offering a few remarks to the company: whereupon the person in the cocked-hat, had no doubt that the company would be very happy to hear any remarks that the man in the long coat might wish to offer.

"I feel a great delicacy, gentlemen, in coming for-'ard," said the man in the long coat, "having the misforchune to be a coachman, and being only admitted as a honorary member of these agreeable swarrys, but I do feel myself bound, gentlemen — drove into a corner, if I may use the expression — to make known an afflicting circumstance which has come to my knowledge; which has happened I may say within the soap of my every-day contemplation. Gentlemen, our friend Mr. Whiffers (everybody looked at the individual in orange), our friend Mr. Whiffers has resigned."

Universal astonishment fell upon the hearers. Each gentleman looked in his neighbor's face, and then transferred his glance to the upstanding coachman.

"You may well be sapparised, gentlemen," said the coachman. "I will not wenchure to state the reasons of this irrepairabel loss to the service, but I will beg Mr. Whiffers to state them himself, for the improvement and imitation of his admiring friends."

The suggestion being loudly approved of, Mr. Whiffers explained. He said he certainly could have wished to have continued to hold the appointment he had just resigned. The uniform was extremely rich and expensive, the females of the family was most agreeable, and the duties of the situation was not, he was bound to say, too heavy: the principal service that was required of him, being, that he should look out of the hall-window as much as possible, in company with another gentleman, who had also resigned. He could have wished to have spared that company the painful and disgusting detail on which he was about to enter, but as the explanation had been demanded of him, he had no alternative but to state, boldly and distinctly, that he had been required to eat cold meat.

It is impossible to conceive the disgust which this avowal awakened in the bosoms of the hearers. Loud cries of "Shame!" mingled with groans and hisses, prevailed for a quarter of an hour.

Mr. Whiffers then added that he feared a portion of this outrage might be traced to his own forbearing and accommodating disposition. He had a distinct recollection of having once consented to eat salt butter, and he had, moreover, on an occasion of sudden sickness in the house, so far forgotten himself as to carry a coal scuttle

up to the second floor. He trusted he had not lowered himself in the good opinion of his friends by this frank confession of his faults; and he hoped the promptness with which he had resented the last unmanly outrage on his feelings, to which he had referred, would reinstate him in their good opinion, if he had.

Mr. Whiffers's address was responded to with a shout of admiration, and the health of the interesting martyr was drunk in a most enthusiastic manner; for this, the martyr returned thanks, and proposed their visitor, Mr. Weller — a gentleman whom he had not the pleasure of an intimate acquaintance with, but who was the friend of Mr. John Smauker, which was a sufficient letter of recommendation to any society of gentlemen whatever, or wherever. On this account, he should have been disposed to have given Mr. Weller's health with all the honors, if his friends had been drinking wine; but as they were taking spirits by way of a change: and as it might be inconvenient to empty a tumbler at every toast; he should propose that the honors be understood.

At the conclusion of this speech, everybody took a sip in honor of Sam; and Sam having ladled out, and drunk, two full glasses of punch in honor of himself, returned thanks in a neat speech.

"Wery much obliged to you, old fellers," said Sam, ladling away at the punch in the most unembarrassed manner possible, "for this here compliment; wich comin' from sich a quarter, is wery overvelmin'. I've heerd a good deal on you as a body, but I will say, that I never thought you was sich uncommon nice men as I find you air. I only hope you'll take care o' yourselves, and not compromise nothin' o' your dignity, which is a wery charmin' thing to see, when one's out a-walkin',

and has always made me wery happy to look at, ever since I was a boy about half as high as the brass-headed stick o' my wery respectable friend, Blazes, there. As to the wictim of oppression in the suit o' brimstone, all I can say of him, is, that I hope he'll get jist as good a berth as he deserves: in vich case it's wery little cold swarry as ever he'll be troubled with ag'in."

Here Sam sat down with a pleasant smile, and his speech having been vociferously applauded, the company broke up.

"Wy, you don't mean to say you're a-goin', old feller?" said Sam Weller to his friend Mr. John Smauker.

"I must indeed," said Mr. Smauker; "I promised Bantam."

"Oh, wery well," said Sam; "that's another thing. P'raps he'd resign if you disapp'inted him. You a'n't a-goin', Blazes?"

"Yes, I am," said the man with the cocked-hat.

"Wot, and leave three quarters of a bowl of punch behind you!" said Sam; "nonsense, sit down ag'in."

Mr. Tuckle was not proof against this invitation. He laid aside the cocked-hat and stick which he had just taken up, and said he would have one glass, for good-fellowship's sake.

As the gentleman in blue went home the same way as Mr. Tuckle, he was prevailed upon to stop too. When the punch was about half gone, Sam ordered in some oysters from the greengrocer's shop; and the effect of both was so extremely exhilarating, that Mr. Tuckle, dressed out with the cocked-hat and stick, danced the frog hornpipe among the shells on the table: while the gentleman in blue played an accompaniment upon an ingenious musical instrument formed of a hair-comb and

a curl-paper. At last, when the punch was all gone, and the night nearly so, they sallied forth to see each other home. Mr. Tuckle no sooner got into the open air, than he was seized with a sudden desire to lie on the curb-stone; Sam thought it would be a pity to contradict him, and so let him have his own way. As the cocked-hat would have been spoilt if left there, Sam very considerately flattened it down on the head of the gentleman in blue, and putting the big stick in his hand, propped him up against his own street-door, rang the bell, and walked quietly home.

At a much earlier hour next morning than his usual time of rising, Mr. Pickwick walked down-stairs completely dressed, and rang the bell.

"Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, when Mr. Weller appeared in reply to the summons, "shut the door."

Mr. Weller did so.

"There was an unfortunate occurrence here, last night, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, "which gave Mr. Winkle some cause to apprehend violence from Mr. Dowler."

"So I've heerd from the old lady down-stairs, sir," replied Sam.

"And I'm sorry to say, Sam," continued Mr. Pickwick, with a most perplexed countenance, "that in dread of this violence, Mr. Winkle has gone away."

"Gone avay!" said Sam.

"Left the house early this morning, without the slightest previous communication with me," replied Mr. Pickwick. "And is gone, I know not where."

"He should ha' stopped and fought it out, sir," replied Sam, contemptuously. "It wouldn't take much to settle that 'ere Dowler, sir."

"Well, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, "I may have my

doubts of his great bravery and determination, also. But however that may be, Mr. Winkle is gone. He must be found, Sam — found and brought back to me."

"And s'pose he won't come back, sir," said Sam.

"He must be made, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Who's to do it, sir?" inquired Sam with a smile.

"You," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"Wery good, sir."

With these words Mr. Weller left the room, and immediately afterwards was heard to shut the street-door. In two hours' time he returned with as much coolness as if he had been despatched on the most ordinary message possible, and brought the information that an individual, in every respect answering Mr. Winkle's description, had gone over to Bristol that morning, by the branch coach from the Royal Hotel.

"Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, grasping his hand, "you're a capital fellow; an invaluable fellow. You must follow him, Sam."

"Cert'nly, sir," replied Mr. Weller.

"The instant you discover him, write to me immediately, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick. "If he attempts to run away from you, knock him down, or lock him up. You have my full authority, Sam."

"I'll be wery careful, sir," rejoined Sam.

"You'll tell him," said Mr. Pickwick, "that I am highly excited, highly displeased, and naturally indignant, at the very extraordinary course he has thought proper to pursue."

"I will, sir," replied Sam.

"You'll tell him," said Mr. Pickwick, "that if he does not come back to this very house, with you, he will come back with me, for I will come and fetch him."

"I'll mention that 'ere sir," rejoined Sam.

"You think you can find him, Sam?" said Mr. Pickwick, looking earnestly in his face.

"Oh, I'll find him if he's anyvere," rejoined Sam, with great confidence.

"Very well," said Mr. Pickwick. "Then the sooner you go the better."

With these instructions, Mr. Pickwick placed a sum of money in the hands of his faithful servitor, and ordered him to start for Bristol immediately, in pursuit of the fugitive.

Sam put a few necessaries in a carpet-bag, and was ready for starting. He stopped when he had got to the end of the passage, and walking quietly back, thrust his head in at the parlor-door.

"Sir," whispered Sam.

"Well, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"I fully understands my instructions, do I, sir?" inquired Sam.

"I hope so," said Mr. Pickwick.

"It's reg'larly understood about the knockin' down, is it, sir?" inquired Sam.

"Perfectly," replied Mr. Pickwick. "Thoroughly. Do what you think necessary. You have my orders."

Sam gave a nod of intelligence, and withdrawing his head from the door, set forth on his pilgrimage with a light heart.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

HOW MR. WINKLE, WHEN HE STEPPED OUT OF THE FRYING-PAN, WALKED GENTLY AND COMFORTABLY INTO THE FIRE.

THE ill-starred gentleman who had been the unfortunate cause of the unusual noise and disturbance which alarmed the inhabitants of the Royal Crescent in manner and form already described, after passing a night of great confusion and anxiety, left the roof beneath which his friends still slumbered, bound he knew not whither. The excellent and considerate feelings which prompted Mr. Winkle to take this step can never be too highly appreciated, or too warmly extolled. "If," reasoned Mr. Winkle with himself, "if this Dowler attempts (as I have no doubt he will) to carry into execution his threat of personal violence against myself, it will be incumbent on me to call him out. He has a wife; that wife is attached to, and dependent on him. Heavens! if I should kill him in the blindness of my wrath, what would be my feelings ever afterwards!" This painful consideration operated so powerfully on the feelings of the humane young man, as to cause his knees to knock together, and his countenance to exhibit alarming manifestations of inward emotion. Impelled by such reflections, he grasped his carpet-bag, and creeping stealthily down-stairs, shut

the detestable street-door with as little noise as possible, and walked off. Bending his steps towards the Royal Hotel, he found a coach on the point of starting for Bristol; and thinking Bristol as good a place for his purpose as any other he could go to, he mounted on the box, and reached his place of destination in such time as the pair of horses, who went the whole stage and back again twice a day or more, could be reasonably supposed to arrive there.

He took up his quarters at The Bush; and designing to postpone any communication by letter with Mr. Pickwick until it was probable that Mr. Dowler's wrath might have in some degree evaporated, walked forth to view the city, which struck him as being a shade more dirty than any place he had ever seen. Having inspected the docks and shipping, and viewed the cathedral, he inquired his way to Clifton, and being directed thither, took the route which was pointed out to him. But, as the pavements of Bristol are not the widest or cleanest upon earth, so its streets are not altogether the straightest or least intricate; and Mr. Winkle being greatly puzzled by their manifold windings and twistings, looked about him for a decent shop in which he could apply afresh, for counsel and instruction.

His eye fell upon a newly-painted tenement which had been recently converted into something between a shop and a private house, and which a red lamp, projecting over the fanlight of the street-door, would have sufficiently announced as the residence of a medical practitioner, even if the word "Surgery" had not been inscribed in golden characters on a wainscot ground, above the window of what, in times bygone, had been the front parlor. Thinking this an eligible place wherein

to make his inquiries, Mr. Winkle stepped into the little shop where the gilt-labelled drawers and bottles were; and finding nobody there, knocked with a half-crown on the counter, to attract the attention of anybody who might happen to be in the back-parlor, which he judged to be the innermost and peculiar sanctum of the establishment, from the repetition of the word surgery on the door — painted in white letters this time, by way of taking off the monotony.

At the first knock, a sound, as of persons fencing with fire-irons, which had until now been very audible, suddenly ceased; and at the second, a studious-looking young gentleman in green spectacles, with a very large book in his hand, glided quietly into the shop, and, stepping behind the counter, requested to know the visitor's pleasure.

"I am sorry to trouble you, sir," said Mr. Winkle, "but will you have the goodness to direct me to" ——

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared the studious young gentleman, throwing the large book up into the air, and catching it with great dexterity at the very moment when it threatened to smash to atoms all the bottles on the counter. "Here's a start!"

There was, without doubt; for Mr. Winkle was so very much astonished at the extraordinary behavior of the medical gentleman, that he involuntarily retreated towards the door, and looked very much disturbed at his strange reception.

"What, don't you know me?" said the medical gentleman.

Mr. Winkle murmured, in reply, that he had not that pleasure.

"Why then," said the medical gentleman, "there are

hopes for me yet; I may attend half the old women in Bristol if I've decent luck. Get out, you mouldy old villain, get out!" With this adjuration, which was addressed to the large book, the medical gentleman kicked the volume with remarkable agility to the further end of the shop, and pulling off his green spectacles, grinned the identical grin of Robert Sawyer, Esquire, formerly of Guy's Hospital in the Borough, with a private residence in Lant Street.

"You don't mean to say you weren't down upon me!" said Mr. Bob Sawyer, shaking Mr. Winkle's hand with friendly warmth.

"Upon my word I was not," replied Mr. Winkle, returning the pressure.

"I wonder you didn't see the name," said Bob Sawyer, calling his friend's attention to the outer door, on which, in the same white paint, were traced the words "Sawyer, late Nockemorf."

"It never caught my eye," returned Mr. Winkle.

"Lord, if I had known who you were, I should have rushed out, and caught you in my arms," said Bob Sawyer; "but upon my life, I thought you were the King's-taxes."

"No!" said Mr. Winkle.

"I did, indeed," responded Bob Sawyer, "and I was just going to say that I wasn't at home, but if you'd leave a message I'd be sure to give it to myself; for he don't know me: no more does the Lighting and Paving. I think the Church-rates guesses who I am, and I know the Water-works does, because I drew a tooth of his when I first came down here. — But come in, come in!" Chattering in this way, Mr. Bob Sawyer pushed Mr. Winkle into the back room, where, amusing himself by

boring little circular caverns in the chimney-piece with a red-hot poker, sat no less a person than Mr. Benjamin Allen.

"Well," said Mr. Winkle, "this is indeed a pleasure that I did not expect. What a very nice place you have here!"

"Pretty well, pretty well," replied Bob Sawyer. "I *passed*, soon after that precious party, and my friends came down with the needful for this business; so I put on a black suit of clothes, and a pair of spectacles, and came here, to look as solemn as I could."

"And a very snug little business you have, no doubt?" said Mr. Winkle, knowingly.

"Very," replied Bob Sawyer. "So snug, that at the end of a few years you might put all the profits in a wine-glass, and cover 'em over with a gooseberry leaf."

"You cannot surely mean that?" said Mr. Winkle. "The stock itself" —

"Dummies, my dear boy," said Bob Sawyer; "half the drawers have got nothing in 'em, and the other half don't open."

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Winkle.

"Fact — honor!" returned Bob Sawyer, stepping out into the shop, and demonstrating the veracity of the assertion by divers hard pulls at the little gilt knobs on the counterfeit drawers. "Hardly anything real in the shop but the leeches, and *they* are second-hand."

"I shouldn't have thought it!" exclaimed Mr. Winkle, much surprised.

"I hope not," replied Bob Sawyer, "else where's the use of appearances, eh? But what will you take? Do as we do? — that's right. Ben, my fine fellow, put your hand into the cupboard, and bring out the patent digester."

Mr. Benjamin Allen smiled his readiness, and produced from the closet at his elbow a black bottle half full of brandy.

"You don't take water, of course?" said Bob Sawyer.

"Thank you," replied Mr. Winkle. "It's *rather* early: I should like to qualify it, if you have no objection."

"None in the least, if you can reconcile it to your conscience," replied Bob Sawyer; tossing off, as he spoke, a glass of the liquor with great relish. "Ben, the pipkin!"

Mr. Benjamin Allen drew forth, from the same hiding-place, a small brass pipkin, which Bob Sawyer observed he prided himself upon, particularly because it looked so business-like. The water in the professional pipkin having been made to boil, in course of time, by various little shovelfuls of coal, which Mr. Bob Sawyer took out of a practicable window-seat, labelled "Soda Water," Mr. Winkle adulterated his brandy; and the conversation was becoming general, when it was interrupted by the entrance into the shop of a boy, in a sober gray livery and a gold-laced hat, with a small covered basket under his arm: whom Mr. Bob Sawyer immediately hailed with, "Tom, you vagabond, come here."

The boy presented himself accordingly.

"You've been stopping to over all the posts in Bristol, you idle young scamp!" said Mr. Bob Sawyer.

"No, sir, I haven't," replied the boy.

"You had better not!" said Mr. Bob Sawyer, with a threatening aspect. "Who do you suppose will ever employ a professional man, when they see his boy playing at marbles in the gutter, or flying the garter in the horse-road? Have you no feeling for your profession, you groveller? Did you leave all the medicine?"

"Yes sir."

"The powders for the child, at the large house with the new family, and the pills to be taken four times a day at the ill-tempered old gentleman's with the gouty leg?"

"Yes sir."

"Then shut the door, and mind the shop."

"Come," said Mr. Winkle, as the boy retired, "things are not quite so bad as you would have me believe, either. There is *some* medicine to be sent out."

Mr. Bob Sawyer peeped into the shop to see that no stranger was within hearing, and leaning forward to Mr. Winkle, said, in a low tone:

"He leaves it all, at the wrong houses."

Mr. Winkle looked perplexed, and Bob Sawyer and his friend laughed.

"Don't you see?" said Bob; "he goes up to a house, rings the area bell, pokes a packet of medicine without a direction into the servant's hand, and walks off. Servant takes it into the dining-parlor; master opens it, and reads the label, 'Draught to be taken at bedtime — pills as before — lotion as usual — *the* powder. From Sawyer's, late Nockemorf's. Physicians' prescriptions carefully prepared:' and all the rest of it. Shows it to his wife — *she* reads the label; it goes down to the servants — *they* read the label. Next day the boy calls: 'Very sorry — his mistake — immense business — great many parcels to deliver — Mr. Sawyer's compliments — late Nockemorf's.' The name gets known; and that's the thing, my boy, in the medical way; bless your heart, old fellow, it's better than all the advertising in the world. We have got one four-ounce bottle that's been to half the houses in Bristol, and hasn't done yet."

"Dear me, I see," observed Mr. Winkle; "what an excellent plan!"

"Oh, Ben and I have hit upon a dozen such," replied Bob Sawyer, with great glee. "The lamplighter has eightcenpence a week to pull the night-bell for ten minutes, every time he comes round; and my boy always rushes into church, just before the psalms, when the people have got nothing to do but look about 'em, and calls me out, with horror and dismay depicted on his countenance. 'Bless my soul,' everybody says, 'somebody taken suddenly ill! Sawyer, late Nockemorf, sent for. What a business that young man has!'"

At the termination of this disclosure of some of the mysteries of medicine, Mr. Bob Sawyer and his friend, Ben Allen, threw themselves back in their respective chairs, and laughed boisterously. When they had enjoyed the joke to their hearts' content, the discourse changed to topics in which Mr. Winkle was more immediately interested.

We think we have hinted elsewhere, that Mr. Benjamin Allen had a way of becoming sentimental after brandy. The case is not a peculiar one, as we ourself can testify: having, on a few occasions, had to deal with patients who have been afflicted in a similar manner. At this precise period of his existence, Mr. Benjamin Allen had perhaps a greater predisposition to maudlinism than he had ever known before; the cause of which malady was briefly this. He had been staying nearly three weeks with Mr. Bob Sawyer; Mr. Bob Sawyer was not remarkable for temperance, nor was Mr. Benjamin Allen for the ownership of a very strong head; the consequence was, that, during the whole space of time just mentioned, Mr. Benjamin Allen had been wavering between intoxication partial and intoxication complete.

"My dear friend," said Mr. Ben Allen, taking advan-

tage of Mr. Bob Sawyer's temporary absence behind the counter, whither he had retired to dispense some of the second-hand leeches, previously referred to, "my dear friend, I am very miserable."

Mr. Winkle professed his heartfelt regret to hear it, and begged to know whether he could do anything to alleviate the sorrows of the suffering student.

"Nothing, my dear boy — nothing," said Ben. "You recollect Arabella, Winkle — my sister Arabella — a little girl, Winkle, with black eyes — when we were down at Wardle's? I don't know whether you happened to notice her — a nice little girl, Winkle. Perhaps my features may recall her countenance to your recollection?"

Mr. Winkle required nothing to recall the charming Arabella to his mind; and it is rather fortunate he did not, for the features of her brother Benjamin would unquestionably have proved but an indifferent refresher to his memory. He answered, with as much calmness as he could assume, that he perfectly remembered the young lady referred to, and sincerely trusted she was in good health.

"Our friend Bob is a delightful fellow, Winkle," was the only reply of Ben Allen.

"Very," said Mr. Winkle; not much relishing this close connection of the two names.

"I designed 'em for each other; they were made for each other, sent into the world for each other, born for each other, Winkle," said Mr. Ben Allen, setting down his glass with great emphasis. "There's a special destiny in the matter, my dear sir; there's only five years' difference between 'em, and both their birthdays are in August."

Mr. Winkle was too anxious to hear what was to fol-

low, to express much wonderment at this extraordinary coincidence, marvellous as it was; so Mr. Ben Allen, after a tear or two, went on to say, that, notwithstanding all his esteem and respect and veneration for his friend, Arabella had unaccountably and undutifully evinced the most determined antipathy to his person.

"And I think," said Mr. Ben Allen, in conclusion, "*I* think there's a prior attachment."

"Have you any idea who the object of it may be?" asked Mr. Winkle, with great trepidation.

Mr. Ben Allen seized the poker; flourished it, in a warlike manner, above his head; inflicted a savage blow on an imaginary skull, and wound up by saying, in a very expressive manner, that he only wished he could guess — that was all.

"I'd show him what I thought of him," said Mr. Ben Allen. And round went the poker again, more fiercely than before.

All this, was, of course, very soothing to the feelings of Mr. Winkle, who remained silent for a few minutes; but at length mustered up resolution to inquire whether Miss Allen was in Kent.

"No, no," said Mr. Ben Allen, laying aside the poker, and looking very cunning; "I didn't think Wardle's exactly the place for a headstrong girl; so, as I am her natural protector and guardian, our parents being dead, I have brought her down into this part of the country to spend a few months at an old aunt's, in a nice, dull, close place. I think that will cure her, my boy; and if it doesn't, I'll take her abroad for a little while, and see what that 'll do."

"Oh, the aunt's is in Bristol, is it?" faltered Mr. Winkle.

"No, no — not in Bristol," replied Mr. Ben Allen, jerking his thumb over his right shoulder: "over that way — down there. But, hush, here's Bob. Not a word, my dear friend: not a word."

Short as this conversation was, it roused in Mr. Winkle the highest degree of excitement and anxiety. The suspected prior attachment rankled in his heart. Could he be the object of it? Could it be for him that the fair Arabella had looked scornfully on the sprightly Bob Sawyer, or had he a successful rival? He determined to see her, cost what it might; but here an insurmountable objection presented itself, for whether the explanatory "over that way," and "down there," of Mr. Ben Allen, meant three miles off, or thirty, or three hundred, he could in no wise guess.

But he had no opportunity of pondering over his love just then, for Bob Sawyer's return was the immediate precursor of the arrival of a meat-pie from the baker's, of which that gentleman insisted on his staying to partake. The cloth was laid by an occasional charwoman, who officiated in the capacity of Mr. Bob Sawyer's housekeeper; and a third knife and fork having been borrowed from the mother of the boy in the gray livery (for Mr. Sawyer's domestic arrangements were as yet conducted on a limited scale), they sat down to dinner; the beer being served up, as Mr. Sawyer remarked, "in its native pewter."

After dinner, Mr. Bob Sawyer ordered in the largest mortar in the shop, and proceeded to brew a reeking jorum of rum-punch therein: stirring up and amalgamating the materials with a pestle in a very creditable and apothecary-like manner. Mr. Sawyer, being a bachelor, had only one tumbler in the house, which was assigned

to Mr. Winkle as a compliment to the visitor: Mr. Ben Allen being accommodated with a funnel with a cork in the narrow end: and Bob Sawyer contenting himself with one of those wide-lipped crystal vessels inscribed with a variety of cabalistic characters, in which chemists are wont to measure out their liquid drugs in compounding prescriptions. These preliminaries adjusted, the punch was tasted, and pronounced excellent; and it having been arranged that Bob Sawyer and Ben Allen should be considered at liberty to fill twice to Mr. Winkle's once, they started fair, with great satisfaction and good-fellowship.

There was no singing, because Mr. Bob Sawyer said it wouldn't look professional; but to make amends for this deprivation there was so much talking and laughing that it might have been heard, and very likely was, at the end of the street: which conversation materially lightened the hours and improved the mind of Mr. Bob Sawyer's boy, who, instead of devoting the evening to his ordinary occupation of writing his name on the counter, and rubbing it out again, peeped through the glass door, and thus listened and looked on, at the same time.

The mirth of Mr. Bob Sawyer was rapidly ripening into the furious; Mr. Ben Allen was fast relapsing into the sentimental; and the punch had wellnigh disappeared altogether; when the boy hastily running in, announced that a young woman had just come over, to say that Sawyer late Nockemorf was wanted directly, a couple of streets off. This broke up the party. Mr. Bob Sawyer, understanding the message, after some twenty repetitions, tied a wet cloth round his head to sober himself, and having partially succeeded, put on his green spectacles and issued forth. Resisting all entreaties to stay till

he came back, and finding it quite impossible to engage Mr. Ben Allen in any intelligible conversation on the subject nearest his heart, or indeed on any other, Mr. Winkle took his departure, and returned to the Bush.

The anxiety of his mind, and the numerous meditations which Arabella had awakened, prevented his share of the mortar of punch producing that effect upon him which it would have had, under other circumstances. So, after taking a glass of soda-water and brandy at the bar, he turned into the coffee-room, dispirited rather than elevated by the occurrences of the evening.

Sitting in front of the fire, with his back towards him, was a tallish gentleman in a great-coat: the only other occupant of the room. It was rather a cool evening for the season of the year, and the gentleman drew his chair aside to afford the new-comer a sight of the fire. What were Mr. Winkle's feelings when, in so doing, he disclosed to view the face and figure of the vindictive and sanguinary Dowler!

Mr. Winkle's first impulse was to give a violent pull at the nearest bell-handle, but that unfortunately happened to be immediately behind Mr. Dowler's head. He had made one step towards it, before he checked himself. As he did so, Mr. Dowler very hastily drew back.

"Mr. Winkle, sir. Be calm. Don't strike me. I won't bear it. A blow! Never!" said Mr. Dowler, looking mecker than Mr. Winkle had expected in a gentleman of his ferocity.

"A blow, sir?" stammered Mr. Winkle.

"A blow, sir," replied Dowler. "Compose your feelings. Sit down. Hear me."

"Sir," said Mr. Winkle, trembling from head to foot, "before I consent to sit down beside, or opposite you,

without the presence of a waiter, I must be secured by some further understanding. You used a threat against me last night, sir — a dreadful threat, sir." Here Mr. Winkle turned very pale indeed, and stopped short.

"I did," said Dowler, with a countenance almost as white as Mr. Winkle's. "Circumstances were suspicious. They have been explained. I respect your bravery. Your feeling is upright. Conscious innocence. There's my hand. Grasp it."

"Really sir," said Mr. Winkle, hesitating whether to give his hand or not, and almost fearing that it was demanded in order that he might be taken at an advantage, "really sir, I" ——

"I know what you mean," interposed Dowler. "You feel aggrieved. Very natural. So should I. I was wrong. I beg your pardon. Be friendly. Forgive me." With this, Dowler fairly forced his hand upon Mr. Winkle, and shaking it with the utmost vehemence, declared he was a fellow of extreme spirit, and he had a higher opinion of him than ever.

"Now," said Dowler, "sit down. Relate it all. How did you find me? When did you follow? Be frank. Tell me."

"It's quite accidental," replied Mr. Winkle, greatly perplexed by the curious and unexpected nature of the interview, "Quite."

"Glad of it," said Dowler. "I woke this morning. I had forgotten my threat. I laughed at the accident. I felt friendly. I said so."

"To whom?" inquired Mr. Winkle.

"To Mrs. Dowler. 'You made a vow,' said she. 'I did,' said I. 'It was a rash one,' said she. 'It was, said I. 'I'll apologize. Where is he?'"

"Who?" inquired Mr. Winkle.

"You," replied Dowler. "I went down-stairs. You were not to be found. Pickwick looked gloomy. Shook his head. Hoped no violence would be committed. I saw it all. You felt yourself insulted. You had gone, for a friend perhaps. Possibly for pistols. 'High spirit,' said I. 'I admire him.'"

Mr. Winkle coughed, and beginning to see how the land lay, assumed a look of importance.

"I left a note for you," resumed Dowler. "I said I was sorry. So I was. Pressing business called me here. You were not satisfied. You followed. You required a verbal explanation. You were right. It's all over now. My business is finished. I go back to-morrow. Join me."

As Dowler progressed in his explanation, Mr. Winkle's countenance grew more and more dignified. The mysterious nature of the commencement of their conversation was explained; Mr. Dowler had as great an objection to duelling as himself; in short, this blustering and awful personage was one of the most egregious cowards in existence, and interpreting Mr. Winkle's absence through the medium of his own fears, had taken the same step as himself, and prudently retired until all excitement of feeling should have subsided.

As the real state of the case dawned upon Mr. Winkle's mind, he looked very terrible, and said he was perfectly satisfied; but at the same time, said so, with an air that left Mr. Dowler no alternative but to infer that if he had not been, something most horrible and destructive must inevitably have occurred. Mr. Dowler appeared to be impressed with a becoming sense of Mr. Winkle's magnanimity and condescension; and the two

belligerents parted for the night, with many protestations of eternal friendship.

About half-past twelve o'clock, when Mr. Winkle had been revelling some twenty minutes in the full luxury of his first sleep, he was suddenly awakened by a loud knocking at his chamber-door, which, being repeated with increased vehemence, caused him to start up in bed, and inquire who was there, and what the matter was.

"Please, sir, here's a young man which says he must see you directly," responded the voice of the chamber-maid.

"A young man!" exclaimed Mr. Winkle.

"No mistake about that 'ere, sir," replied another voice through the key-hole; "and if that wery same interestin' young creetur a'n't let in vithout delay, it's wery possible as his legs vill enter afore his countenance." The young man gave a gentle kick at one of the lower panels of the door, after he had given utterance to this hint, as if to add force and point to the remark.

"Is that you, Sam?" inquired Mr. Winkle, springing out of bed.

"Quite unpossible to identify any gen'l'm'n vith any degree o' mental satisfaction, vithout lookin' at him, sir," replied the voice, dogmatically.

Mr. Winkle, not much doubting who the young man was, unlocked the door; which he had no sooner done, than Mr. Samuel Weller entered with great precipitation, and carefully relocking it on the inside, deliberately put the key in his waistcoat pocket: and, after surveying Mr. Winkle from head to foot, said —

"You're a wery humorous young gen'l'm'n, you air, sir!"

"What do you mean by this conduct, Sam?" inquired Mr. Winkle, indignantly. "Get out, sir, this instant. What do you mean, sir?"

"What do *I* mean," retorted Sam; "come, sir, this is raythur too rich, as the young lady said, wen she remonstrated with the pastry-cook, arter he'd sold her a pork-pie as had got nothin' but fat inside. What do *I* mean! Well, that a'n't a bad 'un, that a'n't."

"Unlock that door, and leave this room immediately, sir," said Mr. Winkle.

"I shall leave this here room, sir, just precisely at the wery same moment as you leaves it," responded Sam, speaking in a forcible manner, and seating himself with perfect gravity. "If I find it ncessary to carry you away, pick-a-back, o' course I shall leave it the least bit o' time possible afore you; but allow me to express a hope as you won't reduce me to ex-tremities: in saying wich, I merely quote wot the nobleman said to the fractious pennywinkle, ven he vouldn't come out of his shell by means of a pin, and he conseqvently began to be afeerd that he should be obliged to crack him in the parlor-door." At the end of this address, which was unusually lengthy for him, Mr. Weller planted his hands on his knees, and looked full in Mr. Winkle's face, with an expression of countenance which showed that he had not the remotest intention of being trifled with.

"You're a amiably disposed young man, sir, I don't think," resumed Mr. Weller, in a tone of moral reproof, "to go inwolving our precious governor in all sorts o' fanteegs, wen he's made up his mind to go through everythink for principle. You're far worse nor Dodson, sir; and as for Fogg, I consider him a born angel to you!" Mr. Weller having accompanied this last sentiment with

an emphatic slap on each knee, folded his arms with a look of great disgust, and threw himself back in his chair, as if awaiting the criminal's defence.

"My good fellow," said Mr. Winkle, extending his hand; his teeth chattering all the time he spoke, for he had been standing, during the whole of Mr. Weller's lecture, in his night-gear, "My good fellow, I respect your attachment to my excellent friend, and I am very sorry indeed, to have added to his causes for disquiet. There, Sam, there!"

"Well," said Sam, rather sulkily, but giving the proffered hand a respectful shake at the same time: "Well, so you ought to be, and I am wery glad to find you air; for, if I can help it, I won't have him put upon by nobody, and that's all about it."

"Certainly not, Sam," said Mr. Winkle. "There! Now go to bed, Sam, and we'll talk further about this, in the morning."

"I'm wery sorry," said Sam, "but I can't go to bed."

"Not go to bed!" repeated Mr. Winkle.

"No," said Sam, shaking his head, "Can't be done."

"You don't mean to say you're going back to-night, Sam;" urged Mr. Winkle, greatly surprised.

"Not unless you particklerly wish it," replied Sam; "but I mustn't leave this here room. The governor's orders wos peremptory."

"Nonsense, Sam," said Mr. Winkle, "I must stop here two or three days; and more than that, Sam, you must stop here too, to assist me in gaining an interview with a young lady — Miss Allen, Sam; you remember her — whom I must and will see before I leave Bristol."

But in reply to each of these positions, Sam shook his head with great firmness, and energetically replied, "It can't be done."

After a great deal of argument and representation on the part of Mr. Winkle, however, and a full disclosure of what had passed in the interview with Dowler, Sam began to waver; and at length a compromise was effected, of which the following were the main and principal conditions:

That Sam should retire, and leave Mr. Winkle in the undisturbed possession of his apartment, on condition that he had permission to lock the door on the outside, and carry off the key; provided always, that in the event of an alarm of fire, or other dangerous contingency, the door should be instantly unlocked. That a letter should be written to Mr. Pickwick early next morning, and forwarded per Dowler, requesting his consent to Sam and Mr. Winkle's remaining at Bristol, for the purpose and with the object, already assigned, and begging an answer by the next coach; if favorable, the aforesaid parties to remain accordingly, and if not, to return to Bath immediately on the receipt thereof. And, lastly, that Mr. Winkle should be understood as distinctly pledging himself not to resort to the window, fireplace, or other surreptitious mode of escape in the mean while. These stipulations having been concluded, Sam locked the door and departed.

He had nearly got down-stairs, when he stopped, and drew the key from his pocket.

"I quite forgot about the knockin' down," said Sam, half turning back. "The governor distinctly said it wos to be done; amazin' stupid o' me, that 'ere! Never mind," said Sam, brightening up, "it's easily done to-morrow, anyvays."

Apparently much consoled by this reflection, Mr. Weller once more deposited the key in his pocket, and descended the remainder of the stairs without any fresh visitations of conscience, was soon, in common with the other inmates of the house, buried in profound repose.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

MR. SAMUEL WELLER, BEING INTRUSTED WITH A MISSION OF LOVE, PROCEEDS TO EXECUTE IT; WITH WHAT SUCCESS WILL HEREINAFTER APPEAR.

DURING the whole of next day, Sam kept Mr. Winkle steadily in sight, fully determined not to take his eyes off him for one instant, until he should receive express instructions from the fountain-head. However disagreeable Sam's very close watch and great vigilance were to Mr. Winkle, he thought it better to bear with them, than, by any act of violent opposition, to hazard being carried away by force, which Mr. Weller more than once strongly hinted was the line of conduct that a strict sense of duty prompted him to pursue. There is little reason to doubt that Sam would very speedily have quieted his scruples, by bearing Mr. Winkle back to Bath, bound hand and foot, had not Mr. Pickwick's prompt attention to the note, which Dowler had undertaken to deliver, forestalled any such proceeding. In short, at eight o'clock in the evening, Mr. Pickwick himself walked into the coffee-room of the Bush tavern, and told Sam with a smile, to his very great relief, that he had done quite right, and it was unnecessary for him to mount guard any longer.

"I thought it better to come myself," said Mr. Pick-

wick, addressing Mr. Winkle, as Sam disencumbered him of his great-coat and travelling shawl, "to ascertain, before I gave my consent to Sam's employment in this matter, that you are quite in earnest and serious, with respect to this young lady."

"Serious, from my heart — from my soul!" returned Mr. Winkle, with great energy.

"Remember," said Mr. Pickwick, with beaming eyes, "we met her at our excellent and hospitable friend's, Winkle. It would be an ill return to tamper, lightly, and without due consideration, with this young lady's affections. I'll not allow that, sir — I'll not allow it."

"I have no such intention, indeed," exclaimed Mr. Winkle warmly. "I have considered the matter well, for a long time, and I feel that my happiness is bound up in her."

"That's wot we call tying it up in a small parcel, sir," interposed Mr. Weller, with an agreeable smile.

Mr. Winkle looked somewhat stern at this interruption, and Mr. Pickwick angrily requested his attendant not to jest with one of the best feelings of our nature; to which Sam replied, "That he wouldn't, if he was aware on it; but there were so many on 'em, that he hardly know'd which was the best ones wen he heerd 'em mentioned."

Mr. Winkle then recounted what had passed between himself and Mr. Ben Allen, relative to Arabella; stated that his object was to gain an interview with the young lady, and make a formal disclosure of his passion; and declared his conviction, founded on certain dark hints and mutterings of the aforesaid Ben, that, wherever she was at present immured, it was somewhere near the Downs.

And this was his whole stock of knowledge or suspicion on the subject.

With this very slight clue to guide him, it was determined that Mr. Weller should start next morning on an expedition of discovery; it was also arranged that Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Winkle, who were less confident of their powers, should parade the town meanwhile, and accidentally drop in upon Mr. Bob Sawyer in the course of the day, in the hope of seeing or hearing something of the young lady's whereabout.

Accordingly, next morning, Sam Weller issued forth upon his quest, in no way daunted by the very discouraging prospect before him; and away he walked, up one street and down another — we were going to say, up one hill and down another, only it's all up-hill at Clifton — without meeting with anything or anybody that tended to throw the faintest light upon the matter in hand. Many were the colloquies into which Sam entered with grooms who were airing horses on roads, and nursemaids who were airing children in lanes; but nothing could Sam elicit from either the first mentioned or the last, which bore the slightest reference to the object of his artfully prosecuted inquiries. There were a great many young ladies in a great many houses, the greater part whereof were shrewdly suspected by the male and female domestics to be deeply attached to somebody, or perfectly ready to become so, if opportunity offered. But as none among these young ladies was Miss Arabella Allen, the information left Sam at exactly the old point of wisdom at which he had stood before.

Sam struggled across the Downs against a good high wind, wondering whether it was always necessary to hold your hat on with both hands in that part of the country,

and came to a shady by-place, about which were sprinkled several little villas of quiet and secluded appearance. Outside a stable-door at the bottom of a long black lane without a thoroughfare, a groom in undress was idling about, apparently persuading himself that he was doing something with a spade and a wheelbarrow. We may remark, in this place, that we have scarcely ever seen a groom near a stable, in his lazy moments, who has not been, to a greater or less extent, the victim of this singular delusion.

Sam thought he might as well talk to this groom as to any one else, especially as he was very tired with walking, and there was a good large stone just opposite the wheelbarrow; so he strolled down the lane, and, seating himself on the stone, opened a conversation with the ease and freedom for which he was remarkable.

"Mornin', old friend," said Sam.

"Arternoon, you mean," replied the groom, casting a surly look at Sam.

"You're wery right, old friend," said Sam; "I *do* mean arternoon. How are you?"

"Why, I don't find myself much the better for seeing of you," replied the ill-tempered groom.

"That's wery odd — that is," said Sam, "for you look so uncommon cheerful, and seem altogether so lively, that it does vun's heart good to see you."

The surly groom looked surlier still at this, but not sufficiently so to produce any effect upon Sam, who immediately inquired, with a countenance of great anxiety, whether his master's name was not Walker.

"No it a'n't," said the groom.

"Nor Brown, I s'pose?" said Sam.

"No, it a'n't."

"Nor Vilson?"

"No; nor that neither," said the groom.

"Vell," replied Sam, "then I'm mistaken, and he hasn't got the honor o' my acquaintance, which I thought he had. Don't wait here out o' compliment to me," said Sam, as the groom wheeled in the barrow, and prepared to shut the gate. "Ease afore ceremony, old boy; I'll excuse you."

"I'd knock your head off for half a crown," said the surly groom, bolting one half of the gate.

"Couldn't afford to have it done on those terms," rejoined Sam. "It 'ud be worth a life's board vages, at least, to you, and 'ud be cheap at that. Make my compliments in-doors. Tell 'em not to vait dinner for me, and say they needn't mind puttin' any by, for it 'll be cold afore I come in."

In reply to this, the groom, waxing very wroth, muttered a desire to damage somebody's person; but disappeared without carrying it into execution: slamming the door angrily after him, and wholly unheeding Sam's affectionate request, that he would leave him a lock of his hair, before he went.

Sam continued to sit on the large stone, meditating upon what was best to be done, and revolving in his mind a plan for knocking at all the doors within five miles of Bristol: taking them at a hundred and fifty or two hundred a day, and endeavoring to find Miss Arabella by that expedient: when accident, all of a sudden, threw in his way what he might have sat there for a twelvemonth and yet not found without it.

Into the lane where he sat, there opened three or four garden-gates, belonging to as many houses, which though detached from each other, were only separated by their

gardens. As these were large and long, and well planted with trees, the houses were not only at some distance off, but the greater part of them were nearly concealed from view. Sam was sitting with his eyes fixed upon the dust-heap, outside the next gate to that by which the groom had disappeared, profoundly turning over in his mind the difficulties of his present undertaking, when the gate opened, and a female servant came out into the lane to shake some bedside carpets.

Sam was so very busy with his own thoughts that it is probable he would have taken no more notice of the young woman than just raising his head and remarking that she had a very neat and pretty figure, if his feelings of gallantry had not been most strongly roused by observing that she had no one to help her, and that the carpets seemed too heavy for her single strength. Mr. Weller was a gentleman of great gallantry in his own way, and he no sooner remarked this circumstance than he hastily rose from the large stone, and advanced towards her.

"My dear," said Sam, sliding up with an air of great respect, "You'll spile that wery pretty figure out o' all proportion if you shake them carpets by yourself. Let me help you."

The young lady, who had been coyly affecting not to know that a gentleman was so near, turned round as Sam spoke — no doubt (indeed she said so, afterwards) to decline this offer from a perfect stranger — when instead of speaking, she started back, and uttered a half-suppressed scream. Sam was scarcely less staggered, for in the countenance of the well-shaped female servant, he beheld the very features of his Valentine: the pretty housemaid from Mr. Nupkins's.

"Wy, Mary, my dear!" said Sam.

"Lauk, Mr. Weller," said Mary, "how you do frighten one!"

Sam made no verbal answer to this complaint, nor can we precisely say what reply he *did* make. We merely know that after a short pause Mary said, "Lor do adun, Mr. Weller!" and that his hat had fallen off a few moments before — from both of which tokens we should be disposed to infer that one kiss, or more, had passed between the parties.

"Why, how did you come here?" said Mary, when the conversation to which this interruption had been offered, was resumed.

"O' course I came to look arter you, my darlin'," replied Mr. Weller; for once permitting his passion to get the better of his veracity.

"And how did you know I was here?" inquired Mary. "Who could have told you that I took another service at Ipswich, and that they afterwards moved all the way here? Who *could* have told you that, Mr. Weller?"

"Ah to be sure," said Sam, with a cunning look, "that's the p'int. Who could ha' told me?"

"It wasn't Mr. Muzzle, was it?" inquired Mary.

"Oh no," replied Sam, with a solemn shake of the head, "it warn't him."

"It must have been the cook," said Mary.

"O' course it must," said Sam.

"Well, I never heard the like of that!" exclaimed Mary.

"No more did I," said Sam. "But Mary, my dear" — here Sam's manner grew extremely affectionate — "Mary, my dear, I've got another affair in hand as is wery

pressin'. There's one o' my governor's friends — Mr. Winkle, you remember him."

"Him in the green coat?" said Mary. "Oh yes, I remember him."

"Well," said Sam, "he's in a horrid state o' love; reg'larly comfoozled, and done over with it."

"Lor!" interposed Mary.

"Yes," said Sam; "but that's nothin' if we could find out the young 'ooman;" and here Sam, with many digressions upon the personal beauty of Mary, and the unspeakable tortures he had experienced since he last saw her, gave a faithful acount of Mr. Winkle's present predicament.

"Well!" said Mary, "I never did!"

"O' course not," said Sam, "and nobody never did, nor never vill neither; and here am I a-walkin' about like the wandering Jew — a sportin' character you have perhaps heerd on, Mary my dear, as wos alvays doin' a match ag'in' time, and never vent to sleep — looking arter this here Miss Arabella Allen."

"Miss who?" said Mary, in great astonishment.

"Miss Arabella Allen," said Sam.

"Goodness gracious!" said Mary, pointing to the garden-door which the sulky groom had locked after him. "Why it's that very house; she's been living there these six weeks. Their upper housemaid, which is lady's maid too, told me all about it over the wash-house palin's before the family was out of bed, one mornin'."

"Wot, the wery next door to you?" said Sam.

"The very next," replied Mary.

Mr. Weller was so deeply overcome on receiving this intelligence, that he found it absolutely necessary to cling to his fair informant for support; and divers little love

passages had passed between them, before he was sufficiently collected to return to the subject.

"Vell," said Sam at length, "if this don't beat cock-fightin', nothin' never vill, as the Lord Mayor said, ven the chief secretary o' state proposed his missis's health arter dinner. That wery next house! Wy, I've got a message to her as I've been a-tryin' all day to deliver."

"Ah," said Mary, "but you can't deliver it now, because she only walks in the garden in the evening, and then only for a very little time; she never goes out, without the old lady."

Sam ruminated for a few moments, and finally hit upon the following plan of operations; that he should return just at dusk — the time at which Arabella invariably took her walk — and being admitted by Mary into the garden of the house to which she belonged, contrive to scramble up the wall beneath the overhanging boughs of a large pear-tree, which would effectually screen him from observation; there deliver his message, and arrange, if possible, an interview on behalf of Mr. Winkle for the ensuing evening at the same hour. Having made this arrangement with great despatch, he assisted Mary in the long-deferred occupation of shaking the carpets.

It is not half as innocent a thing as it looks, that shaking little pieces of carpet — at least, there may be no great harm in the shaking, but the folding is a very insidious process. So long as the shaking lasts, and the two parties are kept the carpet's length apart, it is as innocent an amusement as can well be devised; but when the folding begins, and the distance between them gets gradually lessened from one half its former length to a quarter, and then to an eighth, and then to a six-

teenth, and then to a thirty-second, if the carpet be long enough: it becomes dangerous. We do not know, to a nicety, how many pieces of carpet were folded in this instance, but we can venture to state that as many pieces as there were, so many times did Sam kiss the pretty housemaid.

Mr. Weller regaled himself with moderation at the nearest tavern until it was nearly dusk, and then returned to the lane without the thoroughfare. Having been admitted into the garden by Mary, and having received from that lady sundry admonitions concerning the safety of his limbs and neck, Sam mounted into the pear-tree to wait until Arabella should come in sight.

He waited so long without this anxiously expected event occurring, that he began to think it was not going to take place at all, when he heard light footsteps upon the gravel, and immediately afterwards beheld Arabella walking pensively down the garden. As soon as she came nearly below the tree, Sam began, by way of gently indicating his presence, to make sundry diabolical noises similar to those which would probaby be natural to a person of middle age who had been afflicted with a combination of inflammatory sore throat, croup, and hooping-cough from his earliest infancy.

Upon this, the young lady cast a hurried glance towards the spot from whence the dreadful sounds proceeded; and her previous alarm being not at all diminished when she saw a man among the branches, she would most certainly have decamped, and alarmed the house, had not fear fortunately deprived her of the power of moving, and caused her to sink down on a garden-seat: which happened by good luck to be near at hand.

"She's a-goin' off," soliloquized Sam, in great perplexity. "Wot a thing it is, as these here young creeturs *will* go a-faintin' avay just wen they oughtn't to. Here, young 'ooman, Miss Sawbones, Mrs. Vinkle, don't!"

Whether it was the magic of Mr. Winkle's name, or the coolness of the open air, or some recollection of Mr. Weller's voice, that revived Arabella, matters not. She raised her head and languidly inquired "Who's that, and what do you want?"

"Hush!" said Sam, swinging himself on to the wall, and crouching there in as small a compass as he could reduce himself to, "only me, miss, only me."

"Mr. Pickwick's servant!" said Arabella, earnestly.

"The wery same, miss," replied Sam. "Here's Mr. Vinkle reg'larly sewed up vith desperation, miss."

"Ah!" said Arabella, drawing nearer the wall.

"Ah indeed," said Sam. "Ve thought ve should ha' been obliged to straight-veskit him last night; he's been a-ravin' all day; and he says if he can't see you afore to-morrow night's over, he vishes he may be somethin'-unpleasanted if he don't drownd hisself."

"Oh no, no, Mr. Weller!" said Arabella, clasping her hands.

"That's wot he says, miss," replied Sam. "He's a man of his word, and it's my opinion he'll do it, miss. He's heerd all about you from the Sawbones in barnacles."

"From my brother!" said Arabella, having some faint recognition of Sam's description.

"I don't rightly know which is your brother, miss," replied Sam. "Is it the dirtiest vun o' the two?"

"Yes, yes, Mr. Weller," returned Arabella, "go on. Make haste, pray."

"Well, miss," said Sam, "he's heerd all about it from him; and it's the gov'nor's opinion that if you don't see him wery quick, the Sawbones as we've been a-speakin' on, 'ull get as much extra lead in his head as 'll damage the dewelopment o' the orgins if they ever put it in spirits artervards."

"Oh, what can I do to prevent these dreadful quarrels!" exclaimed Arabella.

"It's the suspicion of a priory 'tachment as is the cause of it all," replied Sam. "You'd better see him, miss."

"But how? — where?" cried Arabella. "I dare not leave the house alone. My brother is so unkind, so unreasonable! I know how strange my talking thus to you must appear, Mr. Weller, but I am very, very unhappy" — and here poor Arabella wept so bitterly, that Sam grew chivalrous.

"It may seem wery strange talkin' to me about these here affairs, miss," said Sam with great vehemence; "but all I can say is, that I'm not only ready but villin' to do anythin' as 'll make matters agreeable; and if chuckin' either o' them Sawboneses out o' winder 'ull do it, I'm the man." As Sam Weller said this, he tucked up his wristbands, at the imminent hazard of falling off the wall in so doing, to intimate his readiness to set to work immediately.

Flattering as these professions of good feeling were, Arabella resolutely declined (most unaccountably, as Sam thought,) to avail herself of them. For some time she strenuously refused to grant Mr. Winkle the interview Sam had so pathetically requested; but at length, when the conversation threatened to be interrupted by the unwelcome arrival of a third party, she hurriedly gave him

to understand, with many professions of gratitude, that it was barely possible she might be in the garden an hour later, next evening. Sam understood this, perfectly well; and Arabella, bestowing upon him one of her sweetest smiles, tripped gracefully away: leaving Mr. Weller in a state of very great admiration of her charms, both personal and mental.

Having descended in safety from the wall, and not forgotten to devote a few moments to his own particular business in the same department, Mr. Weller then made the best of his way back to the Bush, where his prolonged absence had occasioned much speculation and some alarm.

"We must be careful," said Mr. Pickwick, after listening attentively to Sam's tale, "not for our own sakes, but for that of the young lady. We must be very cautious."

"*We!*" said Mr. Winkle, with marked emphasis.

Mr. Pickwick's momentary look of indignation at the tone of this remark, subsided into his characteristic expression of benevolence, as he replied:

"*We*, sir! I shall accompany you."

"You!" said Mr. Winkle.

"I," replied Mr. Pickwick, mildly. "In affording you this interview, the young lady has taken a natural, perhaps, but still a very imprudent step. If I am present at the meeting — a mutual friend, who is old enough to be the father of both parties — the voice of calumny can never be raised against her, hereafter."

Mr. Pickwick's eyes lightened with honest exultation at his own foresight, as he spoke thus. Mr. Winkle was touched at this little trait of his delicate respect for the young *protégée* of his friend, and took his hand with a feeling of regard, akin to veneration.

"You *shall* go," said Mr. Winkle.

"I will," said Mr. Pickwick. "Sam, have my great-coat and shawl ready, and order a conveyance to be at the door to-morrow evening, rather earlier than is absolutely necessary, in order that we may be in good time."

Mr. Weller touched his hat as an earnest of his obedience, and withdrew to make all needful preparations for the expedition.

The coach was punctual to the time appointed; and Mr. Weller, after duly installing Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Winkle inside, took his seat on the box by the driver. They alighted, as had been agreed on, about a quarter of a mile from the place of rendezvous, and desiring the coachman to await their return, proceeded the remaining distance on foot.

It was at this stage of the undertaking that Mr. Pickwick, with many smiles and various other indications of great self-satisfaction, produced from one of his coat-pockets a dark lantern, with which he had specially provided himself for the occasion, and the great mechanical beauty of which, he proceeded to explain to Mr. Winkle, as they walked along, to the no small surprise of the few stragglers they met.

"I should have been the better for something of this kind in my last garden expedition, at night; eh, Sam?" said Mr. Pickwick, looking good-humoredly round at his follower, who was trudging behind.

"Wery nice things, if they're managed properly, sir," replied Mr. Weller; "but when you don't want to be seen, I think they're more useful arter the candle's gone out, than wen it's alight."

Mr. Pickwick appeared struck by Sam's remark, for

he put the lantern into his pocket again, and they walked on in silence.

"Down here, sir," said Sam. "Let me lead the way. This is the lane, sir."

Down the lane they went, and dark enough it was. Mr. Pickwick brought out the lantern, once or twice, as they groped their way along, and threw a very brilliant little tunnel of light before them, about a foot in diameter. It was very pretty to look at, but seemed to have the effect of rendering surrounding objects rather darker than before.

At length they arrived at the large stone. Here Sam recommended his master and Mr. Winkle to seat themselves, while he reconnoitred, and ascertained whether Mary was yet in waiting.

After an absence of five or ten minutes, Sam returned, to say that the gate was opened, and all quiet. Following him with stealthy tread, Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Winkle soon found themselves in the garden. Here everybody said "Hush!" a good many times; and that being done, no one seemed to have any very distinct apprehension of what was to be done next.

"Is Miss Allen in the garden yet, Mary?" inquired Mr. Winkle, much agitated.

"I don't know, sir," replied the pretty housemaid. "The best thing to be done, sir, will be for Mr. Weller to give you a hoist up into the tree, and perhaps Mr. Pickwick will have the goodness to see that nobody comes up the lane, while I watch at the other end of the garden. Goodness gracious, what's that?"

"That 'ere blessed lantern 'ull be the death on us all," exclaimed Sam, peevishly. "Take care wot you're a-doin' on, sir; you're a-sendin' a blaze o' light, right into the back parlor winder."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Pickwick, turning hastily aside, "I didn't mean to do that."

"Now it's in the next house, sir," remonstrated Sam.

"Bless my heart!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, turning round again.

"Now it's in the stable, and they'll think the place is afire," said Sam. "Shut it up, sir, can't you?"

"It's the most extraordinary lantern I ever met with, in all my life!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, greatly bewildered by the effects he had so unintentionally produced. "I never saw such a powerful reflector."

"It'll be vun too powerful for us, if you keep blazin' avay in that manner, sir," replied Sam, as Mr. Pickwick, after various unsuccessful efforts, managed to close the slide. "There's the young lady's footsteps. Now, Mr. Vinkle, sir, up vith you."

"Stop, stop!" said Mr. Pickwick, "I must speak to her first. Help me up, Sam."

"Gently, sir," said Sam, planting his head against the wall, and making a platform of his back. "Step a-top o' that 'ere flower-pot, sir. Now then, up vith you."

"I'm afraid I shall hurt you, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Never mind me, sir," replied Sam. "Lend him a hand, Mr. Vinkle, sir. Steady, sir, steady. That's the time o' day!"

As Sam spoke, Mr. Pickwick, by exertions almost supernatural in a gentleman of his years and weight, contrived to get upon Sam's back; and Sam gently raising himself up, and Mr. Pickwick holding on fast by the top of the wall, while Mr. Winkle clasped him tight by the legs, they contrived by these means to bring his spectacles just above the level of the coping.

"My dear," said Mr. Pickwick, looking over the wall, and catching sight of Arabella, on the other side. "Don't be frightened, my dear, 'tis only me."

"Oh, pray go away, Mr. Pickwick," said Arabella. "Tell them all to go away. I am so dreadfully frightened. Dear, dear Mr. Pickwick, don't stop there. You'll fall down and kill yourself, I know you will."

"Now, pray don't alarm yourself, my dear," said Mr. Pickwick, soothingly. "There is not the least cause for fear, I assure you. Stand firm, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, looking down.

"All right, sir," replied Mr. Weller. "Don't be longer than you can conweniently help, sir. You're raythor heavy."

"Only another moment, Sam," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"I merely wished you to know, my dear, that I should not have allowed my young friend to see you in this clandestine way, if the situation in which you are placed, had left him any alternative; and lest the impropriety of this step should cause you any uneasiness, my love, it may be a satisfaction to you, to know that I am present. That's all, my dear."

"Indeed, Mr. Pickwick, I am very much obliged to you for your kindness and consideration," replied Arabella, drying her tears with her handkerchief. She would probably have said much more, had not Mr. Pickwick's head disappeared with great swiftness, in consequence of a false step on Sam's shoulder, which brought him suddenly to the ground. He was up again in an instant, however; and bidding Mr. Winkle make haste and get the interview over, ran out into the lane to keep watch, with all the courage and ardor of a youth. Mr. Winkle himself, inspired by the occa-

sion, was on the wall in a moment: merely pausing to request Sam to be careful of his master.

"I'll take care on him, sir," replied Sam. "Leave him to me."

"Where is he? What's he doing, Sam?" inquired Mr Winkle.

"Bless his old gaiters," rejoined Sam, looking out at the garden-door. "He's a-keepin' guard in the lane vith that 'ere dark lantern, like a amiable Guy Fawkes! I never see such a fine creetur in my days. Blessed if I don't think his heart must ha' been born five-and-twenty year arter his body, at least!"

Mr. Winkle stayed not to hear the encomium upon his friend. He had dropped from the wall; thrown himself at Arabella's feet; and by this time was pleading the sincerity of his passion with an eloquence worthy even of Mr. Pickwick himself.

While these things were going on in the open air, an elderly gentleman of scientific attainments was seated in his library, two or three houses off, writing a philosophical treatise, and ever and anon moistening his clay and his labors with a glass of claret from a venerable-looking bottle which stood by his side. In the agonies of composition, the elderly gentleman looked sometimes at the carpet, sometimes at the ceiling, and sometimes at the wall; and when neither carpet, ceiling, nor wall afforded the requisite degree of inspiration, he looked out of the window.

In one of these pauses of invention, the scientific gentleman was gazing abstractedly on the thick darkness outside, when he was very much surprised by observing a most brilliant light glide through the air, at a short distance above the ground, and almost instantaneously van-

ish. After a short time the phenomenon was repeated, not once or twice, but several times: at last the scientific gentleman, laying down his pen, began to consider to what natural causes these appearances were to be assigned.

They were not meteors; they were too low. They were not glow-worms; they were too high. They were not will-o'-the-wisps: they were not fire-flies; they were not fire-works. What could they be? Some extraordinary and wonderful phenomenon of nature, which no philosopher had ever seen before; something which it had been reserved for him alone to discover, and which he should immortalize his name by chronicling for the benefit of posterity. Full of this idea, the scientific gentleman seized his pen again, and committed to paper sundry notes of these unparalleled appearances, with the date, day, hour, minute, and precise second at which they were visible: all of which were to form the data of a voluminous treatise of great research and deep learning, which should astonish all the atmospherical sages that ever drew breath in any part of the civilized globe.

He threw himself back in his easy chair, wrapped in contemplations of his future greatness. The mysterious light appeared more brilliantly than before: dancing, to all appearance, up and down the lane: crossing from side to side: and moving in an orbit as eccentric as comets themselves.

The scientific gentleman was a bachelor. He had no wife to call in and astonish, so he rang the bell for his servant.

"Pruffle," said the scientific gentleman, "there is something very extraordinary in the air to-night. Did you see that?" said the scientific gentleman, point-

ing out of the window, as the light again became visible.

"Yes, I did, sir."

"What do you think of it, Pruffle?"

"Think of it, sir?"

"Yes. You have been bred up in this country. What should you say was the cause of those lights now?"

The scientific gentleman smilingly anticipated Pruffle's reply that he could assign no cause for them at all. Pruffle meditated.

"I should say it was thieves, sir," said Pruffle at length.

"You're a fool, and may go down-stairs," said the scientific gentleman.

"Thank you, sir," said Pruffle. And down he went.

But the scientific gentleman could not rest, under the idea of the ingenious treatise he had projected being lost to the world, which must inevitably be the case, if the speculation of the ingenious Mr. Pruffle were not stifled in its birth. He put on his hat and walked quickly down the garden, determined to investigate the matter to the very bottom.

Now, shortly before the scientific gentleman walked out into the garden, Mr. Pickwick had run down the lane as fast as he could, to convey a false alarm that somebody was coming that way: occasionally drawing back the slide of the dark lantern to keep himself from the ditch. The alarm was no sooner given, than Mr. Winkle scrambled back over the wall, and Arabella ran into the house; the garden-gate was shut, and the three adventurers were making the best of their way down the lane, when they were startled by the scientific gentleman unlocking his garden-gate.

"Hold hard," whispered Sam, who was, of course, the first of the party. "Show a light for just vun second, sir."

Mr. Pickwick did as he was desired, and Sam seeing a man's head peeping out very cautiously, within half a yard of his own, gave it a gentle tap with his clenched fist, which knocked it, with a hollow sound, against the gate. Having performed this feat with great suddenness and dexterity, Mr. Weller caught Mr. Pickwick up on his back, and followed Mr. Winkle down the lane, at a pace which, considering the burden he carried, was perfectly astonishing.

"Have you got your vind back ag'in, sir?" inquired Sam, when they had reached the end.

"Quite — quite now," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"Then come along, sir," said Sam, setting his master on his feet again. "Come betveen us, sir. Not half a mile to run. Think you're vinnin' a cup, sir. Now for it!"

Thus encouraged, Mr. Pickwick made the very best use of his legs. It may be confidently stated that a pair of black gaiters never got over the ground in better style than did those of Mr. Pickwick on this memorable occasion.

The coach was waiting, the horses were fresh, the roads were good, and the driver was willing. The whole party arrived in safety at the Bush before Mr. Pickwick had recovered his breath.

"In with you at once, sir," said Sam, as he helped his master out. "Don't stop a second in the street, arter that 'ere exercise. Beg your pardon, sir," continued Sam, touching his hat as Mr. Winkle descended. "Hope there warn't a priory 'tachment, sir?"

Mr. Winkle grasped his humble friend by the hand, and whispered in his ear, "It's all right, Sam; quite right;" upon which Mr. Weller struck three distinct blows upon his nose in token of intelligence; smiled, winked, and proceeded to put the steps up, with a countenance expressive of lively satisfaction.

As to the scientific gentleman, he demonstrated in a masterly treatise, that these wonderful lights were the effect of electricity; and clearly proved the same by detailing how a flash of fire danced before his eyes when he put his head out of the gate, and how he received a shock which stunned him for a full quarter of an hour afterwards; which demonstration delighted all the Scientific Associations beyond measure, and caused him to be considered a light of science ever afterwards.

CHAPTER XL.

INTRODUCES MR. PICKWICK TO A NEW, AND NOT UNINTERESTING SCENE, IN THE GREAT DRAMA OF LIFE.

THE remainder of the period which Mr. Pickwick had assigned as the duration of the stay at Bath, passed over without the occurrence of anything material. Trinity Term commenced. On the expiration of its first week, Mr. Pickwick and his friends returned to London; and the former gentleman, attended of course by Sam, straightway repaired to his old quarters at the George and Vulture.

On the third morning after their arrival, just as all the clocks in the city were striking nine individually, and somewhere about nine hundred and ninety-nine collectively, Sam was taking the air in George Yard, when a queer sort of fresh-painted vehicle drove up, out of which there jumped with great agility, throwing the reins to a stout man who sat beside him, a queer sort of gentleman, who seemed made for the vehicle, and the vehicle for him.

The vehicle was not exactly a gig, neither was it a stanhope. It was not what is currently denominated a dog-cart, neither was it a taxed-cart, nor a chaise-cart,

nor a guillotined cabriolet; and yet it had something of the character of each and every of these machines. It was painted a bright yellow, with the shafts and wheels picked out in black; and the driver sat, in the orthodox sporting style, on cushions piled about two feet above the rail. The horse was a bay, a well-looking animal enough; but with something of a flash and dog-fighting air about him, nevertheless, which accorded admirably, both with the vehicle and his master.

The master himself was a man of about forty, with black hair, and carefully combed whiskers: dressed in a particularly gorgeous manner: with plenty of articles of jewelry about him — all about three sizes larger than those which are usually worn by gentlemen — and a rough great-coat to crown the whole. Into one pocket of this great-coat, he thrust his left hand the moment he dismounted, while from the other he drew forth, with his right, a very bright and glaring silk handkerchief, with which he whisked a speck or two of dust from his boots, and then, crumpling it in his hand, swaggered up the court.

It had not escaped Sam's attention that, when this person dismounted, a shabby-looking man in a brown great-coat shorn of divers buttons, who had been previously slinking about, on the opposite side of the way, crossed over, and remained stationary close by. Having something more than a suspicion of the object of the gentleman's visit, Sam preceded him to the George and Vulture, and, turning sharp round, planted himself in the centre of the door-way.

"Now, my fine fellow!" said the man in the rough coat, in an imperious tone: attempting, at the same time, to push his way past.

"Now, sir, wot's the matter?" replied Sam, returning the push with compound interest.

"Come, none of this, my man; this won't do with me," said the owner of the rough coat, raising his voice, and turning white. "Here, Smouch!"

"Well, wot's amiss here?" growled the man in the brown coat, who had been gradually sneaking up the court during this short dialogue.

"Only some insolence of this young man's," said the principal, giving Sam another push.

"Come, none o' this gammon," growled Smouch, giving him another, and a harder one.

This last push had the effect which it was intended by the experienced Mr. Smouch to produce; for while Sam, anxious to return the compliment, was grinding that gentleman's body against the door-post, the principal crept past, and made his way to the bar: whither Sam, after bandying a few epithetical remarks with Mr. Smouch, followed at once.

"Good-morning, my dear," said the principal, addressing the young lady in the bar, with Botany Bay ease, and New South Wales gentility; "which is Mr. Pickwick's room, my dear?"

"Show him up," said the bar-maid to a waiter, without deigning another look at the exquisite, in reply to his inquiry.

The waiter led the way up-stairs as he was desired, and the man in the rough coat followed, with Sam behind him: who, in his progress up the staircase, indulged in sundry gestures indicative of supreme contempt and defiance: to the unspeakable gratification of the servants and other lookers-on. Mr. Smouch, who was troubled

with a hoarse cough, remained below, and expectorated in the passage.

Mr. Pickwick was fast asleep in bed, when his early visitor, followed by Sam, entered the room. The noise they made, in so doing, awoke him.

"Shaving water, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, from within the curtains.

"Shave you directly, Mr. Pickwick," said the visitor, drawing one of them back from the bed's head. "I've got an execution against you, at the suit of Bardell. — Here's the warrant. — Common Pleas. — Here's my card. I suppose you'll come over to my house." Giving Mr. Pickwick a friendly tap on the shoulder, the sheriff's officer — for such he was — threw his card on the counterpane, and pulled a gold toothpick from his waistcoat pocket.

"Namby's the name," said the sheriff's deputy, as Mr. Pickwick took his spectacles from under the pillow, and put them on, to read the card. "Namby, Bell Alley, Coleman Street."

At this point Sam Weller, who had had his eyes fixed hitherto on Mr. Namby's shining beaver, interfered:

"Are you a Quaker?" said Sam.

"I'll let you know who I am, before I've done with you," replied the indignant officer. "I'll teach you manners, my fine fellow, one of these fine mornings."

"Thankee," said Sam. "I'll do the same for you. Take your hat off." With this, Mr. Weller, in the most dexterous manner, knocked Mr. Namby's hat to the other side of the room: with such violence that he had very nearly caused him to swallow the gold toothpick into the bargain.

"Observe this, Mr. Pickwick," said the disconcerted

officer, gasping for breath. "I've been assaulted in the execution of my dooty by your servant in your chamber. I'm in bodily fear. I call you to witness this."

"Don't witness nothin', sir," interposed Sam. "Shut your eyes up tight, sir. I'd pitch him out o' winder, only he couldn't fall far enough, 'cause o' the leads outside."

"Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, in an angry voice, as his attendant made various demonstrations of hostilities, "if you say another word, or offer the slightest interference with this person, I discharge you that instant."

"But, sir," said Sam.

"Hold your tongue," interposed Mr. Pickwick. "Take that hat up again."

But this, Sam flatly and positively refused to do; and, after he had been severely reprimanded by his master, the officer, being in a hurry, condescended to pick it up himself: venting a great variety of threats against Sam meanwhile, which that gentleman received with perfect composure: merely observing that if Mr. Namby would have the goodness to put his hat on again, he would knock it into the latter end of next week. Mr. Namby, perhaps thinking that such a process might be productive of inconvenience to himself, declined to offer the temptation, and, soon after, called up Smouch. Having informed him that the capture was made, and that he was to wait for the prisoner until he should have finished dressing, Namby then swaggered out, and drove away. Smouch, requesting Mr. Pickwick, in a surly manner, "to be as alive as he could, for it was a busy time," drew up a chair by the door, and sat there, until he had finished dressing. Sam was then despatched for a hackney coach: and in it the triumvirate proceeded to

Coleman Street. It was fortunate the distance was short; for Mr. Smouch, besides possessing no very enchanting conversational powers, was rendered a decidedly unpleasant companion in a limited space, by the physical weakness to which we have elsewhere adverted.

The coach having turned into a very narrow and dark street, stopped before a house with iron bars to all the windows; the door-posts of which, were graced by the name and title of "Namby, Officer to the Sheriffs of London;" the inner gate having been opened by a gentleman who might have passed for a neglected twin brother of Mr. Smouch, and who was endowed with a large key for the purpose, Mr. Pickwick was shown into the "coffee-room."

This coffee-room was a front parlor: the principal features of which, were fresh sand, and stale tobacco smoke. Mr. Pickwick bowed to the three persons who were seated in it when he entered; and having despatched Sam for Perker, withdrew into an obscure corner, and from thence looked with some curiosity upon his new companions.

One of these was a mere boy of nineteen or twenty, who, though it was yet barely ten o'clock, was drinking gin and water, and smoking a cigar: amusements to which, judging from his inflamed countenance, he had devoted himself pretty constantly for the last year or two of his life. Opposite him, engaged in stirring the fire with the toe of his right boot, was a coarse, vulgar young man of about thirty, with a sallow face and harsh voice: evidently possessed of that knowledge of the world, and captivating freedom of manner, which is to be acquired in public-house parlors, and at low billiard-tables. The third tenant of the apartment was a middle-

aged man in a very old suit of black, who looked pale and haggard, and paced up and down the room incessantly: stopping, now and then, to look with great anxiety out of the window as if he expected somebody, and then resuming his walk.

"You'd better have the loan of my razor this morning, Mr. Ayresleigh," said the man who was stirring the fire, tipping the wink to his friend the boy.

"Thank you, no, I shan't want it; I expect I shall be out, in the course of an hour or so," replied the other in a hurried manner. Then, walking again up to the window, and once more returning disappointed, he sighed deeply, and left the room; upon which the other two burst into a loud laugh.

"Well, I never saw such a game as that," said the gentleman who had offered the razor, whose name appeared to be Price. "Never!" Mr. Price confirmed the assertion with an oath, and then laughed again, when of course the boy (who thought his companion one of the most dashing fellows alive) laughed also.

"You'd hardly think, would you now," said Price, turning towards Mr. Pickwick, "that that chap's been here a week yesterday, and never once shaved himself yet, because he feels so certain he's going out in half an hour's time, that he thinks he may as well put it off till he gets home?"

"Poor man!" said Mr. Pickwick. "Are his chances of getting out of his difficulties really so great?"

"Chances be d—d," replied Price; "he hasn't half the ghost of one. I wouldn't give *that* for his chance of walking about the streets this time ten years." With this, Mr. Price snapped his fingers contemptuously, and rang the bell.

"Give me a sheet of paper, Crookey," said Mr. Price to the attendant, who in dress and general appearance looked something between a bankrupt grazier, and a drover in a state of insolvency; "and a glass of brandy and water, Crookey, d'ye hear? I'm going to write to my father, and I must have a stimulant, or I shan't be able to pitch it strong enough into the old boy." At this facetious speech, the young boy, it is almost needless to say, was fairly convulsed.

"That's right," said Mr. Price. "Never say die. All fun, a'n't it?"

"Prime!" said the young gentleman.

"You've some spirit about you, you have," said Price. "You've seen something of life."

"I rather think I have!" replied the boy. He had looked at it through the dirty panes of glass in a bar door.

Mr. Pickwick feeling not a little disgusted with this dialogue, as well as with the air and manner of the two beings by whom it had been carried on, was about to inquire whether he could not be accommodated with a private sitting-room, when two or three strangers of genteel appearance entered, at sight of whom the boy threw his cigar into the fire, and whispering to Mr. Price that they had come to "make it all right" for him, joined them at a table in the further end of the room.

It would appear, however, that matters were not going to be made all right quite so speedily as the young gentleman anticipated; for a very long conversation ensued, of which Mr. Pickwick could not avoid hearing certain angry fragments regarding dissolute conduct, and repeated forgiveness. At last, there were very distinct allusions made by the oldest gentleman of the party to

one Whitecross Street, at which the young gentleman, notwithstanding his primeness and his spirit, and his knowledge of life into the bargain, reclined his head upon the table, and howled dismally.

Very much satisfied with this sudden bringing down of the youth's valor, and effectual lowering of his tone Mr. Pickwick rang the bell, and was shown, at his own request, into a private room furnished with a carpet, table, chairs, sideboard, and sofa, and ornamented with a looking-glass, and various old prints. Here, he had the advantage of hearing Mrs. Namby's performance on a square piano overhead, while the breakfast was getting ready; and when it came, Mr. Perker arrived also.

"Aha, my dear sir," said the little man, "nailed at last, eh? Come, come, I'm not sorry for it either, because now you'll see the absurdity of this conduct. I've noted down the amount of the taxed costs and damages for which the ca-sa was issued, and we had better settle at once and lose no time. Namby is come home by this time, I dare say. What say you, my dear sir, shall I draw a check, or will you?" The little man rubbed his hands with affected cheerfulness as he said this, but glancing at Mr. Pickwick's countenance, could not forbear at the same time casting a desponding look towards Sam Weller.

"Perker," said Mr. Pickwick, "let me hear no more of this, I beg. I see no advantage in staying here, so I shall go to prison to-night."

"You can't go to Whitecross Street, my dear sir," said Perker. "Impossible! There are sixty beds in a ward; and the bolt's on, sixteen hours out of the four-and-twenty."

"I would rather go to some other place of confinement

if I can," said Mr. Pickwick. "If not, I must make the best I can of that."

"You can go to the Fleet, my dear sir, if you're determined to go somewhere," said Perker.

"That'll do," said Mr. Pickwick. "I'll go there, directly I've finished my breakfast."

"Stop, stop, my dear sir; not the least occasion for being in such a violent hurry to get into a place that most other men are as eager to get out of," said the good-natured little attorney. "We must have a habeas corpus. There'll be no judge at chambers till four o'clock this afternoon. You must wait till then."

"Very good," said Mr. Pickwick, with unmoved patience. "Then we will have a chop, here, at two. See about it, Sam, and tell them to be punctual."

Mr. Pickwick remaining firm, despite all the remonstrances and arguments of Perker, the chops appeared and disappeared in due course; he was then put into another hackney-coach, and carried off to Chancery Lane; after waiting half an hour or so for Mr. Namby, who had a select dinner party, and could, on no account, be disturbed before.

There were two judges in attendance at Sergeant's Inn — one King's Bench, and one Common Pleas — and a great deal of business appeared to be transacting before them, if the number of lawyer's clerks who were hurrying in and out with bundles of papers, afforded any test. When they reached the low archway which forms the entrance to the Inn, Perker was detained a few moments parleying with the coachman about the fare and the change; and Mr. Pickwick, stepping to one side to be out of the way of the stream of people that were pouring in and out, looked about him with some curiosity.

The people that attracted his attention most, were three or four men of shabby-genteel appearance, who touched their hats to many of the attorneys who passed, and seemed to have some business there, the nature of which Mr. Pickwick could not divine. They were curious-looking fellows. One, was a slim and rather lame man in rusty black, and a white neckerchief; another, was a stout burly person, dressed in the same apparel, with a great reddish-black cloth round his neck ; a third, was a little weazen drunken-looking body with a pimply face. They were loitering about, with their hands behind them, and now and then, with an anxious countenance, whispered something in the ear of some of the gentlemen with papers, as they hurried by. Mr. Pickwick remembered to have very often observed them lounging under the archway when he had been walking past; and his curiosity was quite excited to know to what branch of the profession these dingy-looking loungers could possibly belong.

He was about to propound the question to Namby, who kept close beside him, sucking a large gold ring on his little finger, when Perker bustled up, and observing that there was no time to lose, led the way into the Inn. As Mr. Pickwick followed, the lame man stepped up to him, and civilly touching his hat, held out a written card, which Mr. Pickwick, not wishing to hurt the man's feelings by refusing, courteously accepted and deposited in his waistcoat pocket.

"Now," said Perker, turning round before he entered one of the offices, to see that his companions were close behind him. "In here, my dear sir. Hallo, what do *you* want?"

This last question was addressed to the lame man,

who, unobserved by Mr. Pickwick, made one of the party. In reply to it, the lame man touched his hat again, with all imaginable politeness, and motioned towards Mr. Pickwick.

"No, no," said Perker with a smile. "We don't want you, my dear friend, we don't want you."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the lame man. "The gentleman took my card. I hope you will employ me, sir. The gentleman nodded to me. I'll be judged by the gentleman himself. You nodded to me, sir?"

"Pooh, pooh, nonsense. You didn't nod to anybody, Pickwick? A mistake, a mistake," said Perker.

"The gentleman handed me his card," replied Mr. Pickwick, producing it from his waistcoat-pocket. "I accepted it, as the gentleman seemed to wish it — in fact I had some curiosity to look at it when I should be at leisure. I" ——

The little attorney burst into a loud laugh, and returning the card to the lame man, informing him it was all a mistake, whispered to Mr. Pickwick as the man turned away in dudgeon, that he was only a bail.

"A what!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick.

"A bail," replied Perker.

"A bail?"

"Yes, my dear sir — half a dozen of 'em here. Bail you to any amount, and only charge half-a-crown. Curious trade isn't it?" said Perker, regaling himself with a pinch of snuff.

"What! am I to understand that these men earn a livelihood by waiting about here, to perjure themselves before the judges of the land, at the rate of half-a-crown a crime!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, quite aghast at the disclosure.

"Why, I don't exactly know about perjury, my dear sir," replied the little gentleman. "Harsh word, my dear sir, very harsh word indeed. It's a legal fiction, my dear sir, nothing more." Saying which, the attorney shrugged his shoulders, smiled, took a second pinch of snuff, and led the way into the office of the judge's clerk.

This was a room of specially dirty appearance, with a very low ceiling and old panelled walls; and so badly lighted, that although it was broad day outside, great tallow candles were burning on the desks. At one end, was a door leading to the judge's private apartment, round which were congregated a crowd of attorneys and managing clerks, who were called in, in the order in which their respective appointments stood upon the file. Every time this door was opened to let a party out, the next party made a violent rush to get in; and, as in addition to the numerous dialogues which passed between the gentlemen who were waiting to see the judge, a variety of personal squabbles ensued between the greater part of those who had seen him, there was as much noise as could well be raised in an apartment of such confined dimensions.

Nor were the conversations of these gentlemen the only sounds that broke upon the ear. Standing on a box behind a wooden bar at another end of the room, was a clerk in spectacles, who was "taking the affidavits:" large batches of which were, from time to time, carried into the private room by another clerk for the judge's signature. There were a large number of attorneys' clerks to be sworn, and it being a moral impossibility to swear them all at once, the struggles of these gentlemen to reach the clerk in spectacles, were like those of a

crowd to get in at the pit door of a theatre when his Most Gracious Majesty honors it with his presence. Another functionary, from time to time, exercised his lungs, in calling over the names of those who had been sworn, for the purpose of restoring to them their affidavits after they had been signed by the judge: which gave rise to a few more scuffles; and all these things going on at the same time, occasioned as much bustle as the most active and excitable person could desire to behold. There were yet another class of persons — those who were waiting to attend summonses their employers had taken out, which it was optional to the attorney on the opposite side to attend or not — and whose business it was, from time to time, to cry out the opposite attorney's name: to make certain that he was not in attendance without their knowledge.

For example. Leaning against the wall, close beside the seat Mr. Pickwick had taken, was an office-lad of fourteen, with a tenor voice; near him, a common-law clerk with a bass one.

A clerk hurried in with a bundle of papers, and stared about him.

"Sniggle and Blink," cried the tenor.

"Porkin and Snob," growled the bass.

"Stumpy and Deacon," said the new comer.

Nobody answered; the next man who came in, was hailed by the whole three; and he in his turn shouted for another firm; and then somebody else roared in a loud voice for another; and so forth.

All this time, the man in the spectacles was hard at work, swearing the clerks: the oath being invariably administered, without any effort at punctuation, and usually in the following terms:

"Take the book in your right hand this is your name and handwriting you swear that the contents of this your affidavit are true so help you God a shilling you must get change I haven't got it."

"Well, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick. "I suppose they are getting the *habeas corpus* ready."

"Yes," said Sam, "and I vish they'd bring out the have-his-carcass. It's wery unpleasant keepin' us vaitin' here. I'd ha' got half a dozen have-his-carcasses ready, packed up and all, by this time."

What sort of cumbrous and unmanageable machine, Sam Weller imagined a writ of habeas corpus to be, does not appear; for Perker, at that moment, walked up, and took Mr. Pickwick away.

The usual forms having been gone through, the body of Samuel Pickwick was soon afterwards confided to the custody of the tipstaff, to be by him taken to the Warden of the Fleet Prison, and there detained until the amount of the damages and costs in the action of Bardell against Pickwick was fully paid and satisfied.

"And that," said Mr. Pickwick, laughing, "will be a very long time. Sam, call another hackney-coach. Perker, my dear friend, good-by."

"I shall go with you, and see you safe there," said Perker.

"Indeed," replied Mr. Pickwick, "I would rather go without any other attendant than Sam. As soon as I get settled, I will write and let you know, and I shall expect you immediately. Until then, good-by."

As Mr. Pickwick said this, he got into the coach which had by this time arrived: followed by the tipstaff. Sam having stationed himself on the box, it rolled away.

"A most extraordinary man, that!" said Perker, as he stopped to pull on his gloves.

"What a bankrupt he'd make, sir," observed Mr. Lowten, who was standing near. "How he would bother the commissioners! He'd set 'em at defiance if they talked of committing him, sir."

The attorney did not appear very much delighted with his clerk's professional estimate of Mr. Pickwick's character, for he walked away without deigning any reply.

The hackney-coach jolted along Fleet Street, as hackney-coaches usually do. The horses "went better," the driver said, when they had anything before them, (they must have gone at a most extraordinary pace when there was nothing,) and so the vehicle kept behind a cart; when the cart stopped, it stopped; and when the cart went on again, it did the same. Mr. Pickwick sat opposite the tipstaff; and the tipstaff sat with his hat between his knees, whistling a tune, and looking out of the coach-window.

Time performs wonders. By the powerful old gentleman's aid, even a hackney-coach gets over half a mile of ground. They stopped at length, and Mr. Pickwick alighted at the gate of the Fleet.

The tipstaff, looking over his shoulder to see that his charge was following close at his heels, preceded Mr. Pickwick into the prison; turning to the left, after they had entered, they passed through an open door into a lobby, from which a heavy gate: opposite to that by which they had entered, and which was guarded by a stout turnkey with the key in his hand: led at once into the interior of the prison.

Here they stopped, while the tipstaff delivered his

papers; and here Mr. Pickwick was apprised that he would remain, until he had undergone the ceremony, known to the initiated as "sitting for your portrait."

"Sitting for my portrait!" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Having your likeness taken, sir," replied the stout turnkey. "We're capital hands at likenesses here. Take 'em in no time, and always exact. Walk in, sir, and make yourself at home."

Mr. Pickwick complied with the invitation, and sat himself down: when Mr. Weller, who stationed himself at the back of the chair, whispered that the sitting was merely another term for undergoing an inspection by the different turnkeys, in order that they might know prisoners from visitors.

"Well, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, "then I wish the artists would come. This is rather a public place."

"They von't be long, sir, I des-say," replied Sam. "There's a Dutch clock, sir."

"So I see," observed Mr. Pickwick.

"And a bird-cage, sir," said Sam. "Veels vithin veels, a prison in a prison. A'n't it, sir."

As Mr. Weller made this philosophical remark, Mr. Pickwick was aware that his sitting had commenced. The stout turnkey having been relieved from the lock, sat down, and looked at him carelessly, from time to time, while a long thin man who had relieved him, thrust his hands beneath his coat-tails, and planting himself opposite, took a good long view of him. A third rather surly-looking gentleman: who had apparently been disturbed at his tea, for he was disposing of the last remnant of a crust and butter when he came in: stationed himself close to Mr. Pickwick; and, resting his hands on his hips, inspected him narrowly; while

two others mixed with the group, and studied his features with most intent and thoughtful faces. Mr. Pickwick winced a good deal under the operation, and appeared to sit very uneasily in his chair; but he made no remark to anybody while it was being performed — not even to Sam, who reclined upon the back of the chair: reflecting, partly on the situation of his master, and partly on the great satisfaction it would have afforded him to make a fierce assault upon all the turnkeys there assembled, one after the other, if it were lawful and peaceable so to do.

At length the likeness was completed, and Mr. Pickwick was informed, that he might now proceed into the prison.

"Where am I to sleep to-night?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Why I don't rightly know about to-night," replied the stout turnkey. "You'll be chummed on somebody to-morrow, and then you'll be all snug and comfortable. The first night's generally rather unsettled, but you'll be set all squares to-morrow."

After some discussion, it was discovered that one of the turnkeys had a bed to let, which Mr. Pickwick could have for that night. He gladly agreed to hire it.

"If you'll come with me, I'll show it you at once," said the man. "It a'n't a large 'un; but it's an out-and-outer to sleep in. This way, sir."

They passed through the inner gate, and descended a short flight of steps. The key was turned after them; and Mr. Pickwick found himself, for the first time in his life, within the walls of a debtors' prison.

CHAPTER XLI.

WHAT BEFELL MR. PICKWICK WHEN HE GOT INTO THE FLEET; WHAT PRISONERS HE SAW THERE; AND HOW HE PASSED THE NIGHT.

Mr. Tom Roker, the gentleman who had accompanied Mr. Pickwick into the prison, turned sharp round to the right when he got to the bottom of the little flight of steps, and led the way: through an iron gate which stood open, and up another short flight of steps: into a long narrow gallery, dirty and low, paved with stone, and very dimly lighted by a window at each remote end.

"This," said the gentleman, thrusting his hands into his pockets, and looking carelessly over his shoulder to Mr. Pickwick, "This here is the hall-flight."

"Oh," replied Mr. Pickwick, looking down a dark and filthy staircase, which appeared to lead to a range of damp and gloomy stone vaults, beneath the ground, "and those, I suppose, are the little cellars where the prisoners keep their small quantities of coals. Unpleasant places to have to go down to; but very convenient, I dare say."

"Yes, I shouldn't wonder if they was convenient," replied the gentleman, "seeing that a few people live there, pretty snug. That's the Fair, that is."

"My friend," said Mr. Pickwick, "you don't really mean to say that human beings live down in those wretched dungeons?"

"Don't I?" replied Mr. Roker, with indignant astonishment; "why shouldn't I?"

"Live! — live down there!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick.

"Live down there! yes, and die down there, too, wery often!" replied Mr. Roker; "and what of that? Who's got to say anything ag'in' it? Live down there! — yes, and a wery good place it is to live in, a'n't it?"

As Roker turned somewhat fiercely upon Mr. Pickwick in saying this, and, moreover, muttered, in an excited fashion, certain unpleasant invocations concerning his own eyes, limbs, and circulating fluids, the latter gentleman deemed it advisable to pursue the discourse no further. Mr. Roker then proceeded to mount another staircase, as dirty as that which led to the place which had just been the subject of discussion, in which ascent he was closely followed by Mr. Pickwick and Sam.

"There," said Mr. Roker, pausing for breath when they reached another gallery of the same dimensions as the one below, "this is the coffee-room flight: the one above's the third, and the one above that's the top; and the room where you're a-going to sleep to-night is the warden's room, and it's this way — come on." Having said all this in a breath, Mr. Roker mounted another flight of stairs, with Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller following at his heels.

These staircases received light from sundry windows placed at some little distance above the floor, and looking into a gravelled area bounded by a high brick wall,

with iron *chevaux-de-frise* at the top. This area, it appeared from Mr. Roker's statement, was the racket-ground; and it further appeared, on the testimony of the same gentleman, that there was a smaller area in that portion of the prison which was nearest Farringdon Street, denominated and called "the Painted Ground," from the fact of its walls having once displayed the semblances of various men-of-war in full sail, and other artistical effects, achieved, in bygone times, by some imprisoned draughtsman in his leisure hours.

Having communicated this piece of information, apparently more for the purpose of discharging his bosom of an important fact, than with any specific view of enlightening Mr. Pickwick, the guide, having at length reached another gallery, led the way into a small passage at the extreme end: opened a door: and disclosed an apartment of an appearance by no means inviting, containing eight or nine iron bedsteads.

"There," said Mr. Roker, holding the door open, and looking triumphantly round at Mr. Pickwick, "There's a room!"

Mr. Pickwick's face, however, betokened such a very trifling portion of satisfaction at the appearance of his lodging, that Mr. Roker looked for a reciprocity of feeling into the countenance of Samuel Weller, who, until now, had observed a dignified silence.

"There's a room, young man," observed Mr. Roker.

"I see it," replied Sam, with a placid nod of the head.

"You wouldn't think to find such a room as this in the Farringdon Hotel, would you?" said Mr. Roker, with a complacent smile.

To this Mr. Weller replied with an easy and unstudied closing of one eye; which might be considered to

mean, either that he would have thought it, or that he would not have thought it, or that he had never thought anything at all about it: as the observer's imagination suggested. Having executed this feat, and reopened his eye, Mr. Weller proceeded to inquire which was the individual bedstead that Mr. Roker had so flatteringly described as an out-and-outer to sleep in.

"That's it," replied Mr. Roker, pointing to a very rusty one in a corner. "It would make any one go to sleep, that bedstead would, whether they wanted to or not."

"I should think," said Sam, eying the piece of furniture in question with a look of excessive disgust, "I should think poppies was nothin' to it."

"Nothing at all," said Mr. Roker.

"And I s'pose," said Sam, with a sidelong glance at his master, as if to see whether there were any symptoms of his determination being shaken by what passed, "I s'pose the other gen'l'men as sleeps here, *are* gen-'l'men."

"Nothing but it," said Mr. Roker. "One of 'em takes his twelve pints of ale a-day, and never leaves off smoking, even at his meals."

"He must be a first-rater," said Sam.

"A, 1," replied Mr. Roker.

Nothing daunted, even by this intelligence, Mr. Pickwick smilingly announced his determination to test the powers of the narcotic bedstead for that night; and Mr. Roker, after informing him that he could retire to rest at whatever hour he thought proper without any further notice or formality, walked off, leaving him standing with Sam in the gallery.

It was getting dark; that is to say, a few gas jets

were kindled in this place which was never light, by way of compliment to the evening, which had set in outside. As it was rather warm, some of the tenants of the numerous little rooms which opened into the gallery on either hand, had set their doors ajar. Mr. Pickwick peeped into them as he passed along, with great curiosity and interest. Here four or five great hulking fellows, just visible through a cloud of tobacco-smoke, were engaged in noisy and riotous conversation over half-emptied pots of beer, or playing at all-fours with a very greasy pack of cards. In the adjoining room, some solitary tenant might be seen, poring, by the light of a feeble tallow candle, over a bundle of soiled and tattered papers, yellow with dust and dropping to pieces from age: writing, for the hundredth time, some lengthened statement of his grievances, for the perusal of some great man whose eyes it would never reach, or whose heart it would never touch. In a third, a man, with his wife and a whole crowd of children, might be seen making up a scanty bed on the ground, or upon a few chairs, for the younger ones to pass the night in. And in a fourth, and a fifth, and a sixth, and a seventh, the noise, and the beer, and the tobacco-smoke, and the cards, all came over again in greater force than before.

In the galleries themselves, and more especially on the staircases, there lingered a great number of people, who came there: some because their rooms were empty and lonesome: others because their rooms were full and hot: and the greater part because they were restless and uncomfortable, and not possessed of the secret of exactly knowing what to do with themselves. There were many classes of people here, from the laboring man in his fustian jacket, to the broken-down spendthrift in his shawl

dressing-gown, most appropriately out at elbows; but there was the same air about them all — a listless, jail-bird, careless swagger; a vagabondish who's-afraid sort of bearing, which is wholly indescribable in words; but which any man can understand in one moment if he wish, by setting foot in the nearest debtors' prison, and looking at the very first group of people he sees there, with the same interest as Mr. Pickwick did.

"It strikes me, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, leaning over the iron-rail at the stair-head, "It strikes me, Sam, that imprisonment for debt is scarcely any punishment at all."

"Think not, sir?" inquired Mr. Weller.

"You see how these fellows drink, and smoke, and roar," replied Mr. Pickwick. "It's quite impossible that they can mind it much."

"Ah, that's just the wery thing, sir," rejoined Sam, "*they* don't mind it; it's a reg'lar holiday to them — all porter and skettles. It's the t'other vuns as gets done over, vith this sort o' thing: them down-hearted fellers as can't svig avay at the beer, nor play skettles neither; them as vould pay if they could, and gets low by being boxed up. I'll tell you wot it is, sir; them as is alvays a-idlin' in public-houses it don't damage at all, and them as is alvays a-workin' wen they can, it damages too much. 'It's unekal,' as my father used to say wen his grog worn't made half-and-half—'It's unekal, and that's the fault on it.'"

"I think you're right, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, after a few moments' reflection, "quite right."

"P'raps, now and then, there's some honest people as likes it," observed Mr. Weller, in a ruminative tone, "but I never heerd o' one as I can call to mind, 'cept the little dirty-faced man in the brown coat; and that was force of habit."

"And who was he?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Wy, that's just the wery point as nobody never know'd," replied Sam.

"But what did he do?"

"Wy he did wot many men as has been much better know'd has done in their time, sir," replied Sam, "he run a match ag'in' the constable, and vun it."

"In other words, I suppose," said Mr. Pickwick, "he got into debt?"

"Just that, sir," replied Sam, "and in course o' time he came here in consekens. It warn't much — execution for nine pound nothin', multiplied by five for costs; but hows'ever here he stopped for seventeen year. If he got any wrinkles in his face, they was stopped up vith the dirt, for both the dirty face and the brown coat wos just the same at the end o' that time as they wos at the beginnin'. He wos a wery peaceful inoffendin' little creetur, and wos alvays a bustlin' about for somebody, or playin' rackets and never vinnin'; till at last the turnkeys they got quite fond on him, and he wos in the lodge ev'ry night, a-chattering vith 'em, and tellin' stories, and all that 'ere. Vun night he wos in there as usual, along vith a wery old friend of his, as wos on the lock, ven he says all of a sudden, 'I a'n't seen the market outside, Bill,' he says (Fleet Market wos there at that time) — 'I a'n't seen the market outside, Bill,' he says, 'for seventeen year.' 'I know you a'n't,' says the turnkey, smoking his pipe. 'I should like to see it for a minit, Bill,' he says. 'Wery probable,' says the turnkey, smoking his pipe wery fierce, and making believe he warn't up to wot the little man wanted. 'Bill,' says the little man, more abrupt than afore, 'I've got the fancy in my head. Let me see the public streets once more

afore I die; and if I a'n't struck with apoplexy, I'll be back in five minits by the clock.' 'And wot 'ud become o' me if you *wos* struck with apoplexy?' said the turnkey. 'Wy,' says the little creetur, 'whoever found me, 'ud bring me home, for I've got my card in my pocket, Bill,' he says, 'No. 20, Coffee-room Flight:' and that wos true, sure enough, for wen he wanted to make the acquaintance of any new comer, he used to pull out a little limp card vith them words on it, and nothin' else; in consideration of vich, he wos alvays called Number Tventy. The turnkey takes a fixed look at him, and at last he says in a solemn manner, 'Tventy,' he says, 'I'll trust you; you won't get your old friend into trouble.' 'No, my boy; I hope I've somethin' better behind here,' says the little man; and as he said it, he hit his little veskit wery hard, and then a tear started out o' each eye, which wos wery extraordinary, for it wos supposed as water never touched his face. He shook the turnkey by the hand; out he vent" ——

"And never came back again," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Wrong for vunce, sir," replied Mr. Weller, "for back he come, two minits afore the time, a bilin' vith rage: sayin' how he'd been nearly run over by a hackney-coach: that he warn't used to it: and he wos blowed if he wouldn't write to the Lord Mayor. They got him pacified at last; and for five years arter that, he never even so much as peeped out o' the lodge-gate."

"At the expiration of that time he died, I suppose," said Mr. Pickwick.

"No he didn't, sir," replied Sam. "He got a curiosity to go and taste the beer at a new public-house over the way, and it wos such a wery nice parlor that, he took it into his head to go there every night, wich he did for a

long time, alvays comin' back reg'lar about a quarter of an hour afore the gate shut, wich wos all wery snug and comfortable. At last he began to get so precious jolly, that he used to forget how the time vent, or care nothin' at all about it, and he vent on gettin' later and later, till vun night his old friend wos just a shuttin' the gate — had turned the key in fact — wen he come up. 'Hold hard, Bill,' he says. 'Wot, a'n't you come home yet, Tventy?' says the turnkey, 'I thought you was in long ago.' 'No I wasn't,' says the little man, vith a smile. 'Well, then, I'll tell you wot it is, my friend,' says the turnkey, openin' the gate wery slow and sulky, 'it's my 'pinion as you've got into bad company o' late, which I'm wery sorry to see. Now, I don't wish to do nothing harsh,' he says, 'but if you can't confine yourself to steady circles, and find your vay back at reg'lar hours, as sure as you're a-standin' there, I'll shut you out altogether!' The little man was seized vith a wiolent fit o' tremblin', and never vent outside the prison walls artervards!"

As Sam concluded, Mr. Pickwick slowly retraced his steps down-stairs. After a few thoughtful turns in the Painted Ground, which, as it was now dark, was nearly deserted, he intimated to Mr. Weller that he thought it high time for him to withdraw for the night; requesting him to seek a bed in some adjacent public-house, and return early in the morning to make arrangements for the removal of his master's wardrobe from the George and Vulture. This request Mr. Samuel Weller prepared to obey, with as good a grace as he could assume, but with a very considerable show of reluctance nevertheless. He even went so far as to essay sundry ineffectual hints regarding the expediency of stretching himself on the gravel for that night; but finding Mr. Pickwick

obstinately deaf to any such suggestions, finally withdrew.

There is no disguising the fact that Mr. Pickwick felt very low-spirited and uncomfortable — not for lack of society, for the prison was very full, and a bottle of wine would at once have purchased the utmost good-fellowship of a few choice spirits, without any more formal ceremony of introduction; but he was alone in the coarse vulgar crowd, and felt the depression of spirit and sinking of heart, naturally consequent upon the reflection that he was cooped and caged up, without a prospect of liberation. As to the idea of releasing himself by ministering to the sharpness of Dodson and Fogg, it never, for an instant, entered his thoughts.

In this frame of mind he turned again into the coffee-room gallery, and walked slowly to and fro. The place was intolerably dirty, and the smell of tobacco-smoke perfectly suffocating. There was a perpetual slamming and banging of doors as the people went in and out; and the noise of their voices and footsteps echoed and re-echoed through the passages constantly. A young woman, with a child in her arms, who seemed scarcely able to crawl, from emaciation and misery, was walking up and down the passage in conversation with her husband, who had no other place to see her in. As they passed Mr. Pickwick, he could hear the female sob; and once she burst into such a passion of grief, that she was compelled to lean against the wall for support, while the man took the child in his arms, and tried to soothe her.

Mr. Pickwick's heart was really too full to bear it, and he went up-stairs to bed.

Now, although the warden's room was a very uncom-

fortable one: being, in every point of decoration and convenience, several hundred degrees inferior to the common infirmary of a county jail, it had at present the merit of being wholly deserted, save by Mr. Pickwick himself. So, he sat down at the foot of his little iron bedstead, and began to wonder how much a year the warden made out of the dirty room. Having satisfied himself, by mathematical calculation, that the apartment was about equal in annual value to the freehold of a small street in the suburbs of London, he took to wondering what possible temptation could have induced a dingy-looking fly that was crawling over his pantaloons, to come into a close prison when he had the choice of so many airy situations — a course of meditation which led him to the irresistible conclusion that the insect was mad. After settling this point, he began to be conscious that he was getting sleepy; whereupon he took his night-cap out of the pocket in which he had had the precaution to stow it in the morning, and, leisurely undressing himself, got into bed, and fell asleep.

"Bravo! Heel over toe — cut and shuffle — pay away at it, Zephyr! I'm smothered if the Opera House isn't your proper hemisphere. Keep it up. Hooray!" These expressions, delivered in a most boisterous tone, and accompanied with loud peals of laughter, roused Mr. Pickwick from one of those sound slumbers which, lasting in reality some half hour, seem to the sleeper to have been protracted for three weeks or a month.

The voice had no sooner ceased, than the room was shaken with such violence that the windows rattled in their frames, and the bedsteads trembled again. Mr. Pickwick started up, and remained for some minutes fixed in mute astonishment at the scene before him.

On the floor of the room, a man in a broad-skirted green coat, with corduroy knee smalls and gray cotton stockings, was performing the most popular steps of a hornpipe, with a slang and burlesque caricature of grace and lightness, which, combined with the very appropriate character of his costume, was inexpressibly absurd. Another man, evidently very drunk, who had probably been tumbled into bed by his companions, was sitting up between the sheets, warbling as much as he could recollect of a comic song, with the most intensely sentimental feeling and expression; while a third, seated on one of the bedsteads, was applauding both performers with the air of a profound connoisseur, and encouraging them by such ebullitions of feeling as had already roused Mr. Pickwick from his sleep.

This last man was an admirable specimen of a class of gentry which never can be seen in full perfection but in such places; — they may be met with, in an imperfect state, occasionally, about stable-yards and public-houses; but they never attain their full bloom except in these hot-beds, which would almost seem to be considerately provided by the Legislature for the sole purpose of rearing them.

He was a tall fellow, with an olive complexion, long dark hair, and very thick bushy whiskers meeting under his chin. He wore no neckerchief, as he had been playing rackets all day, and his open shirt collar displayed their full luxuriance. On his head he wore one of the common eighteen-penny French skull-caps, with a gaudy tassel dangling therefrom, very happily in keeping with a common fustian coat. His legs: which, being long, were afflicted with weakness: graced a pair of Oxford-mixture trousers, made to show the full symmetry

of those limbs. Being somewhat negligently braced, however, and, moreover, but imperfectly buttoned, they fell in a series of not the most graceful folds over a pair of shoes sufficiently down at heel to display a pair of very soiled white stockings. There was a rakish, vagabond smartness, and a kind of boastful rascality, about the whole man, that was worth a mine of gold.

This figure was the first to perceive that Mr. Pickwick was looking on; upon which he winked to the Zephyr, and entreated him, with mock gravity, not to wake the gentleman.

"Why, bless the gentleman's honest heart and soul!" said the Zephyr, turning round and affecting the extremity of surprise; "the gentleman *is* awake. Hem, Shakspeare! How do you do, sir? How is Mary and Sarah, sir? and the dear old lady at home, sir — eh, sir? Will you have the kindness to put my compliments into the first little parcel you're sending that way, sir, and say that I would have sent 'em before, only I was afraid they might be broken in the wagon, sir?"

"Don't overwhelm the gentleman with ordinary civilities when you see he's anxious to have something to drink," said the gentleman with the whiskers, with a jocose air. "Why don't you ask the gentleman what he'll take?"

"Dear me — I quite forgot," replied the other. "What *will* you take, sir? Will you take port-wine, sir, or sherry-wine, sir? I can recommend the ale, sir; or perhaps you'd like to taste the porter, sir? Allow me to have the felicity of hanging up your nightcap, sir."

With this, the speaker snatched that article of dress from Mr. Pickwick's head, and fixed it in a twinkling on that of the drunken man, who, firmly impressed with the

belief that he was delighting a numerous assembly, continued to hammer away at the comic song in the most melancholy strains imaginable.

Taking a man's nightcap from his brow by violent means, and adjusting it on the head of an unknown gentleman of dirty exterior, however ingenious a witticism in itself, is unquestionably one of those which come under the denomination of practical jokes. Viewing the matter precisely in this light, Mr. Pickwick, without the slightest intimation of his purpose, sprang vigorously out of bed; struck the Zephyr so smart a blow in the chest, as to deprive him of a considerable portion of the commodity which sometimes bears his name; and then, recapturing his nightcap, boldly placed himself in an attitude of defence.

"Now," said Mr. Pickwick, gasping no less from excitement than from the expenditure of so much energy, "come on — both of you — both of you!" With this liberal invitation the worthy gentleman communicated a revolving motion to his clenched fists, by way of appalling his antagonists with a display of science.

It might have been Mr. Pickwick's very unexpected gallantry, or it might have been the complicated manner in which he had got himself out of bed, and fallen, all in a mass, upon the hornpipe man, that touched his adversaries. Touched they were; for, instead of then and there making an attempt to commit manslaughter, as Mr. Pickwick implicitly believed they would have done, they paused, stared at each other a short time, and finally laughed outright.

"Well; you're a trump, and I like you all the better for it," said the Zephyr. "Now jump into bed again, or you'll catch the rheumatics. No malice, I hope?"

said the man, extending a hand the size of the yellow clump of fingers which sometimes swings over a glover's door.

"Certainly not," said Mr. Pickwick, with great alacrity; for, now that the excitement was over, he began to feel rather cool about the legs.

"Allow me the *h*onor, sir?" said the gentleman with the whiskers, presenting his dexter hand, and aspirating the h.

"With much pleasure, sir," said Mr. Pickwick; and having executed a very long and solemn shake, he got into bed again.

"My name is Smangle, sir," said the man with the whiskers.

"Oh," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Mine is Mivins," said the man in the stockings.

"I am delighted to hear it, sir," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Hem," coughed Mr. Smangle.

"Did you speak, sir?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"No, I did not, sir," said Mr. Smangle.

"I thought you did, sir," said Mr. Pickwick.

All this was very genteel and pleasant; and, to make matters still more comfortable, Mr. Smangle assured Mr. Pickwick a great many times that he entertained a very high respect for the feelings of a gentleman; which sentiment, indeed, did him infinite credit, as he could be in no wise supposed to understand them.

"Are you going through the Court, sir?" inquired Mr. Smangle.

"Through the what?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Through the Court — Portugal Street — the Court for the relief of —— you know."

"Oh, no," replied Mr. Pickwick. "No, I am not."

"Going out, perhaps?" suggested Mivins.

"I fear not," replied Mr. Pickwick. "I refuse to pay some damages, and am here in consequence."

"Ah," said Mr. Smangle, "paper has been my ruin."

"A stationer, I presume, sir?" said Mr. Pickwick, innocently.

"Stationer! No, no; confound and curse me! — not so low as that. No trade. When I say paper, I mean bills."

"Oh, you use the word in that sense. I see," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Damme! a gentleman must expect reverses," said Smangle. "What of that? Here am I in the Fleet Prison. Well; good. What then? I'm none the worse for that, am I?"

"Not a bit," replied Mr. Mivins. And he was quite right; for, so far from Mr. Smangle being any the worse for it, he was something the better, inasmuch as to qualify himself for the place, he had attained gratuitous possession of certain articles of jewelry, which, long before that, had found their way to the pawnbroker's.

"Well; but come," said Mr. Smangle; "this is dry work. Let's rinse our mouths with a drop of burnt sherry; the last comer shall stand it, Mivins shall fetch it, and I'll help to drink it. That's a fair and gentlemanlike division of labor, anyhow — curse me!"

Unwilling to hazard another quarrel, Mr. Pickwick gladly assented to the proposition, and consigned the money to Mr. Mivins, who, as it was nearly eleven o'clock, lost no time in repairing to the coffee-room on his errand.

"I say," whispered Smangle, the moment his friend had left the room; "what did you give him?"

"Half a sovereign," said Mr. Pickwick.

"He's a devilish pleasant gentlemanly dog," said Mr. Smangle;—"infernal pleasant. I don't know anybody more so; but"—— Here Mr. Smangle stopped short, and shook his head dubiously.

"You don't think there is any probability of his appropriating the money to his own use?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Oh, no—mind, I don't say that; I expressly say that he's a devilish gentlemanly fellow," said Mr. Smangle. "But I think, perhaps, if somebody went down, just to see that he didn't dip his beak into the jug by accident, or make some confounded mistake in losing the money as he came up-stairs, it would be as well. Here, you sir, just run down-stairs, and look after that gentleman, will you?"

This request was addressed to a little, timid-looking, nervous man, whose appearance bespoke great poverty, and who had been crouching on his bedstead all this while, apparently quite stupefied by the novelty of his situation.

"You know where the coffee-room is," said Smangle; "just run down, and tell that gentleman you've come to help him up with the jug. Or—stop—I'll tell you what—I'll tell you how we'll do him," said Smangle, with a cunning look.

"How?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Send down word that he's to spend the change in cigars. Capital thought. Run and tell him that; d'ye hear? They shan't be wasted," continued Smangle, turning to Mr. Pickwick. "*I'll* smoke 'em."

This manœuvring was so exceedingly ingenious, and, withal, performed with such immovable composure and coolness, that Mr. Pickwick would have had no wish to disturb it, even if he had had the power. In a short time Mr. Mivins returned, bearing the sherry, which Mr. Smangle dispensed in two little cracked mugs: considerately remarking, with reference to himself, that a gentleman must not be particular under such circumstances, and, for his part, he was not too proud to drink out of the jug: in which, to show his sincerity, he forthwith pledged the company in a draught which half emptied it.

An excellent understanding having been, by these means, promoted, Mr. Smangle proceeded to entertain his hearers with a relation of divers romantic adventures in which he had been from time to time engaged: involving various interesting anecdotes of a thoroughbred horse, and a magnificent Jewess, both of surpassing beauty, and much coveted by the nobility and gentry of these kingdoms.

Long before these elegant extracts from the biography of a gentleman, were concluded, Mr. Mivins had betaken himself to bed, and set in snoring for the night: leaving the timid stranger and Mr. Pickwick to the full benefit of Mr. Smangle's experiences.

Nor were the two last-named gentlemen as much edified as they might have been, by the moving passages which were narrated. Mr. Pickwick had been in a state of slumber for some time, when he had a faint perception of the drunken man bursting out afresh with the comic song, and receiving from Mr. Smangle a gentle intimation, through the medium of the water-jug, that his audience were not musically disposed. He then once again

dropped off to sleep, with a confused consciousness that Mr. Smangle was still engaged in relating a long story, the chief point of which appeared to be, that, on some occasion particularly stated and set forth, he had "done" a bill and a gentleman at the same time.

CHAPTER XLII.

ILLUSTRATIVE, LIKE THE PRECEDING ONE, OF THE OLD PROVERB, THAT ADVERSITY BRINGS A MAN ACQUAINTED WITH STRANGE BED-FELLOWS. LIKEWISE CONTAINING MR. PICKWICK'S EXTRAORDINARY AND STARTLING ANNOUNCEMENT TO MR. SAMUEL WELLER.

When Mr. Pickwick opened his eyes next morning, the first object upon which they rested, was Samuel Weller, seated upon a small black portmanteau, intently regarding, apparently in a condition of profound abstraction, the stately figure of the dashing Mr. Smangle: while Mr. Smangle himself, who was already partially dressed, was seated on his bedstead, occupied in the desperately hopeless attempt of staring Mr. Weller out of countenance. We say desperately hopeless, because Sam, with a comprehensive gaze, which took in Mr. Smangle's cap, feet, head, face, legs, and whiskers, all at the same time, continued to look steadily on, with every demonstration of lively satisfaction, but with no more regard to Mr. Smangle's personal sentiments on the subject, than he would have displayed had he been inspecting a wooden statue, or a straw-embowelled Guy Faux.

"Well; will you know me again?" said Mr. Smangle, with a frown.

"I'd svear to you anyveres, sir," replied Sam, cheerfully.

"Don't be impertinent to a gentleman, sir," said Mr. Smangle.

"Not on no account," replied Sam. "If you'll tell me wen he wakes, I'll be upon the wery best extra-super behavior!" This observation, having a remote tendency to imply that Mr. Smangle was no gentleman, kindled his ire.

"Mivins!" said Mr. Smangle, with a passionate air.

"What's the office?" replied that gentleman from his couch.

"Who the devil is this fellow?"

"'Gad," said Mr. Mivins, looking lazily out from under the bedclothes, "I ought to ask *you* that. Hasn't he any business here?"

"No," replied Mr. Smangle.

"Then knock him down-stairs, and tell him not to presume to get up till I come and kick him," rejoined Mr. Mivins; with this prompt advice that excellent gentleman again betook himself to slumber.

The conversation exhibiting these unequivocal symptoms of verging on the personal, Mr. Pickwick deemed it a fit point at which to interpose.

"Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Sir," rejoined that gentleman.

"Has anything new occurred since last night?"

"Nothin' partickler, sir," replied Sam, glancing at Mr. Smangle's whiskers; "the late prewailance of a close and confined atmosphere has been rayther favorable to the growth of veeds, of an alarmin' and sangvinary natur'; but vith that 'ere exception things is quiet enough."

"I shall get up," said Mr. Pickwick; "give me some clean things."

Whatever hostile intentions Mr. Smangle might have entertained, his thoughts were speedily diverted by the unpacking of the portmanteau; the contents of which appeared to impress him at once with a most favorable opinion, not only of Mr. Pickwick, but of Sam also, who, he took an early opportunity of declaring, in a tone of voice loud enough for that eccentric personage to overhear, was a regular thorough-bred original, and consequently the very man after his own heart. As to Mr. Pickwick, the affection he conceived for him knew no limits.

"Now is there anything I can do for you, my dear sir?" said Smangle.

"Nothing that I am aware of, I am obliged to you," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"No linen that you want sent to the washerwoman's? I know a delightful washerwoman outside, that comes for my things twice a week; and, by Jove! — how devilish lucky! — this is the very day she calls. Shall I put any of those little things up with mine? Don't say anything about the trouble. Confound and curse it! if one gentleman under a cloud, is not to put himself a little out of the way to assist another gentleman in the same condition, what's human nature?"

Thus spake Mr. Smangle, edging himself meanwhile as near as possible to the portmanteau, and beaming forth looks of the most fervent and disinterested friendship.

"There's nothing you want to give out for the man to brush, my dear creature, is there?" resumed Smangle.

"Nothin' whatever, my fine feller," rejoined Sam, taking the reply into his own mouth. "P'raps if vun of us wos to brush, without troubling the man, it 'ud be more agreeable for all parties, as the schoolmaster said wen the young gentleman objected to being flogged by the butler."

"And there's nothing that I can send in my little box to the washerwoman's, is there?" said Smangle, turning from Sam to Mr. Pickwick, with an air of some discomfiture.

"Nothin' whatever, sir," retorted Sam; "I'm afeerd the little box must be chock full o' your own as it is."

This speech was accompanied with such a very expressive look at that particular portion of Mr. Smangle's attire, by the appearance of which the skill of laundresses in getting up gentlemen's linen is generally tested, that he was fain to turn upon his heel, and, for the present at any rate, to give up all design on Mr. Pickwick's purse and wardrobe. He accordingly retired in dudgeon to the racket-ground, where he made a light and wholesome breakfast on a couple of the cigars which had been purchased on the previous night.

Mr. Mivins, who was no smoker, and whose account for small articles of chandlery had also reached down to the bottom of the slate, and been "carried over" to the other side, remained in bed, and, in his own words, "took it out in sleep."

After breakfasting in a small closet attached to the coffee-room, which bore the imposing title of the Snuggery: the temporary inmate of which, in consideration of a small additional charge, had the unspeakable advantage of overhearing all the conversation in the coffee-

room aforesaid: and after despatching Mr. Weller on some necessary errands: Mr. Pickwick repaired to the Lodge to consult Mr. Roker concerning his future accommodation.

"Accommodation, eh?" said that gentleman, consulting a large book. "Plenty of that, Mr. Pickvick. Your chummage ticket will be on twenty-seven in the third."

"Oh," said Mr. Pickwick. "My what, did you say?"

"Your chummage ticket," replied Mr. Roker; "you're up to that?"

"Not quite," replied Mr. Pickwick, with a smile.

"Why," said Mr. Roker, "it's as plain as Salisbury. You'll have a chummage ticket upon twenty-seven in the third, and them as is in the room will be your chums."

"Are there many of them?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, dubiously.

"Three," replied Mr. Roker.

Mr. Pickwick coughed.

"One of 'em's a parson," said Mr. Roker, filling up a little piece of paper as he spoke; "another's a butcher."

"Eh?" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick.

"A butcher," repeated Mr. Roker, giving the nib of his pen a tap on the desk to cure it of a disinclination to mark. "What a thorough-paced goer he used to be sure-ly! You remember Tom Martin, Neddy?" said Roker, appealing to another man in the Lodge, who was paring the mud off his shoes with a five-and-twenty bladed pocket-knife.

"*I* should think so," replied the party addressed, with a strong emphasis on the personal pronoun.

"Bless my dear eyes!" said Mr. Roker, shaking his head slowly from side to side, and gazing abstractedly out of the grated window before him, as if he were

fondly recalling some peaceful scene of his early youth; "it seems but yesterday that he whopped the coal-heaver down Fox-under-the-Hill by the wharf there. I think I can see him now, a-coming up the Strand between the two street-keepers, a little sobered by the bruising, with a patch o' winegar and brown paper over his right eyelid, and that 'ere lovely bulldog, as pinned the little boy arterwards, a-following at his heels. What a rum thing Time is, a'n't it, Neddy?"

The gentleman to whom these observations were addressed, who appeared of a taciturn and thoughtful cast, merely echoed the inquiry; Mr. Roker, shaking off the poetical and gloomy train of thought into which he had been betrayed, descended to the common business of life, and resumed his pen.

"Do you know what the third gentleman is?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, not very much gratified by this description of his future associates.

"What is that Simpson, Neddy?" said Mr. Roker, turning to his companion.

"What Simpson?" said Neddy.

"Why him in twenty-seven in the third, that this gentleman's going to be chummed on."

"Oh, him!" replied Neddy: "he's nothing exactly. He *was* a horse chaunter: he's a leg now."

"Ah, so I thought," rejoined Mr. Roker, closing the book, and placing the small piece of paper in Mr. Pickwick's hands. "That's the ticket, sir."

Very much perplexed by this summary disposition of his person, Mr. Pickwick walked back into the prison, revolving in his mind what he had better do. Convinced, however, that before he took any other steps it would be advisable to see, and hold personal converse

with, the three gentlemen with whom it was proposed to quarter him, he made the best of his way to the third flight.

After groping about in the gallery for some time, attempting in the dim light to decipher the numbers on the different doors, he at length appealed to a potboy, who happened to be pursuing his morning occupation of gleaning for pewter.

"Which is twenty-seven, my good fellow?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Five doors further on," replied the potboy. "There's the likeness of a man being hung, and smoking a pipe the while, chalked outside the door."

Guided by this direction, Mr. Pickwick proceeded slowly along the gallery, until he encountered the "portrait of a gentleman," above described, upon whose countenance he tapped, with the knuckle of his forefinger — gently at first, and then more audibly. After repeating this process several times without effect, he ventured to open the door and peep in.

There was only one man in the room, and he was leaning out of window as far as he could without overbalancing himself, endeavoring, with great perseverance, to spit upon the crown of the hat of a personal friend on the parade below. As neither speaking, coughing, sneezing, knocking, nor any other ordinary mode of attracting attention, made this person aware of the presence of a visitor, Mr. Pickwick, after some delay, stepped up to the window, and pulled him gently by the coat-tail. The individual brought in his head and shoulders with great swiftness, and surveying Mr. Pickwick from head to foot, demanded in a surly tone what the — something beginning with a capital H — he wanted.

"I believe," said Mr. Pickwick, consulting his ticket, "I believe this is twenty-seven in the third."

"Well?" replied the gentleman.

"I have come here in consequence of receiving this bit of paper," rejoined Mr. Pickwick.

"Hand it over," said the gentleman.

Mr. Pickwick complied.

"I think Roker might have chummed you somewhere else," said Mr. Simpson (for it was the leg), after a very discontented sort of a pause.

Mr. Pickwick thought so also; but, under all the circumstances, he considered it a matter of sound policy to be silent.

Mr. Simpson mused for a few moments after this, and then, thrusting his head out of the window, gave a shrill whistle, and pronounced some word aloud, several times. What the word was, Mr. Pickwick could not distinguish; but he rather inferred that it must be some nickname which distinguished Mr. Martin: from the fact of a great number of gentlemen on the ground below, immediately proceeding to cry "Butcher!" in imitation of the tone in which that useful class of society are wont, diurnally, to make their presence known at area railings.

Subsequent occurrences confirmed the accuracy of Mr. Pickwick's impression; for, in a few seconds, a gentleman, prematurely broad for his years; clothed in a professional blue jean frock, and top-boots with circular toes: entered the room nearly out of breath, closely followed by another gentleman in very shabby black, and a sealskin cap. The latter gentleman, who fastened his coat all the way up to his chin by means of a pin and a button alternately, had a very coarse red face, and looked like a drunken chaplain, which, indeed, he was.

These two gentlemen having by turns perused Mr. Pickwick's billet, the one expressed his opinion that it was "a rig," and the other his conviction that it was "a go." Having recorded their feelings in these very intelligible terms, they looked at Mr. Pickwick and each other in awkward silence.

"It's an aggravating thing, just as we got the beds so snug," said the chaplain, looking at three dirty mattresses, each rolled up in a blanket: which occupied one corner of the room during the day, and formed a kind of slab, on which were placed an old cracked basin, ewer, and soap-dish, of common yellow earthenware, with a blue flower: "Very aggravating."

Mr. Martin expressed the same opinion, in rather stronger terms; Mr. Simpson, after having let a variety of expletive adjectives loose upon society without any substantive to accompany them, tucked up his sleeves, and began to wash the greens for dinner.

While this was going on, Mr. Pickwick had been eying the room, which was filthily dirty, and smelt intolerably close. There was no vestige of either carpet, curtain, or blind. There was not even a closet in it. Unquestionably there were but few things to put away, if there had been one; but, however few in number, or small in individual amount, still remnants of loaves, and pieces of cheese, and damp towels, and scraps of meat, and articles of wearing apparel, and mutilated crockery, and bellows without nozzles, and toasting-forks without prongs, *do* present somewhat of an uncomfortable appearance when they are scattered about the floor of a small apartment, which is the common sitting and sleeping room of three idle men.

"I suppose this can be managed somehow," said the

butcher, after a pretty long silence. "What will you take to go out?"

"I beg your pardon," replied Mr. Pickwick. "What did you say? I hardly understand you."

"What will you take to be paid out?" said the butcher. "The regular chummage is two-and-six. Will you take three bob?"

— "And a bender," suggested the clerical gentleman.

"Well, I don't mind that; it's only twopence apiece more," said Mr. Martin. "What do you say now? We'll pay you out for three-and-sixpence a-week. Come!"

"And stand a gallon of beer down," chimed in Mr. Simpson. "There!"

"And drink it on the spot," said the chaplain. "Now!"

"I really am so wholly ignorant of the rules of this place," returned Mr. Pickwick, "that I do not yet comprehend you. *Can* I live anywhere else? I thought I could not."

At this inquiry Mr. Martin looked, with a countenance of excessive surprise, at his two friends, and then each gentleman pointed with his right thumb over his left shoulder. This action, imperfectly described in words by the very feeble term of "over the left," when performed by any number of ladies or gentlemen who are accustomed to act in unison, has a very graceful and airy effect; its expression is one of light and playful sarcasm.

"*Can* you!" repeated Mr. Martin, with a smile of pity.

"Well, if I knew as little of life as that, I'd eat my hat and swallow the buckle whole," said the clerical gentleman.

"So would I," added the sporting one, solemnly.

After this introductory preface, the three chums informed Mr. Pickwick, in a breath, that money was, in the Fleet, just what money was out of it; that it would instantly procure him almost anything he desired; and that, supposing he had it, and had no objection to spend it, if he only signified his wish to have a room to himself, he might take possession of one, furnished and fitted to boot, in half an hour's time.

With this, the parties separated, very much to their mutual satisfaction: Mr. Pickwick once more retracing his steps to the lodge: and the three companions adjourning to the coffee-room, there to expend the five shillings which the clerical gentleman had, with admirable prudence and foresight, borrowed of him for the purpose.

"I knowed it!" said Mr. Roker, with a chuckle, when Mr. Pickwick stated the object with which he had returned. "Didn't I say so, Neddy?"

The philosophical owner of the universal penknife, growled an affirmative.

"I knowed you'd want a room for yourself, bless you!" said Mr. Roker. "Let me see. You'll want some furnitur'. You'll hire that of me, I suppose? That's the reg'lar thing."

"With great pleasure," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"There's a capital room up in the coffee-room flight, that belongs to a Chancery prisoner," said Mr. Roker. "It'll stand you in a pound a-week. I suppose you don't mind that?"

"Not at all," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Just step there with me," said Roker, taking up his hat with great alacrity; "the matter's settled in five minutes. Lord! why didn't you say at first that you was willing to come down handsome?"

The matter was soon arranged, as the turnkey had foretold. The Chancery prisoner had been there long enough to have lost friends, fortune, home, and happiness, and to have acquired the right of having a room to himself. As he labored, however, under the inconvenience of often wanting a morsel of bread, he eagerly listened to Mr. Pickwick's proposal to rent the apartment; and readily covenanted and agreed to yield him up the sole and undisturbed possession thereof, in consideration of the weekly payment of twenty shillings; from which fund he furthermore contracted to pay out any person or persons that might be chummed upon it.

As they struck the bargain, Mr. Pickwick surveyed him with a painful interest. He was a tall, gaunt, cadaverous man, in an old great-coat and slippers: with sunken cheeks, and a restless, eager eye. His lips were bloodless, and his bones sharp and thin. God help him! the iron teeth of confinement and privation had been slowly filing him down for twenty years.

"And where will you live meanwhile, sir?" said Mr. Pickwick, as he laid the amount of the first week's rent, advance, on the tottering table.

The man gathered up the money with a trembling hand, and replied that he didn't know yet; he must go and see where he could move his bed to.

"I am afraid, sir," said Mr. Pickwick, laying his hand gently and compassionately on his arm; "I am afraid you will have to live in some noisy crowded place. Now, pray, consider this room your own when you want quiet, or when any of your friends come to see you."

"Friends!" interposed the man, in a voice which rattled in his throat. "If I lay dead at the bottom of the deepest mine in the world: tight screwed down and

soldered in my coffin: rotting in the dark and filthy ditch that drags its slime along beneath the foundations of this prison: I could not be more forgotten or unheeded than I am here. I am a dead man, — dead to society, without the pity they bestow on those whose souls have passed to judgment. Friends to see *me!* My God! I have sunk, from the prime of life into old age, in this place, and there is not one to raise his hand above my bed, when I lie dead upon it, and say, 'It is a blessing he is gone!'"

The excitement, which had cast an unwonted light over the man's face, while he spoke, subsided as he concluded; and, pressing his withered hands together in a hasty and disordered manner, he shuffled from the room.

"Rides rather rusty," said Mr. Roker, with a smile. "Ah! they're like the elephants; they feel it now and then, and it makes 'em wild!"

Having made this deeply-sympathizing remark, Mr. Roker entered upon his arrangements with such expedition, that in a short time the room was furnished with a carpet, six chairs, a table, a sofa bedstead, a teakettle, and various small articles, on hire, at the very reasonable rate of seven-and-twenty shillings and sixpence per week.

"Now, is there anything more we can do for you?" inquired Mr. Roker, looking round with great satisfaction, and gayly chinking the first week's hire in his closed fist.

"Why, yes," said Mr. Pickwick, who had been musing deeply for some time. "Are there any people here, who run on errands, and so forth?"

"Outside, do you mean?" inquired Mr. Roker.

"Yes; I mean who are able to go outside. Not prisoners."

"Yes, there is," said Roker. "There's an unfortunate devil, who has got a friend on the poor side, that's glad to do anything of that sort. He's been running odd jobs, and that, for the last two months. Shall I send him?"

"If you please," rejoined Mr. Pickwick. "Stay;—no. The poor side, you say? I should like to see it;—I'll go to him myself."

The poor side of a debtors' prison is, as its name imports, that in which the most miserable and abject class of debtors are confined. A prisoner having declared upon the poor side, pays neither rent nor chummage. His fees, upon entering and leaving the jail, are reduced in amount, and he becomes entitled to a share of some small quantities of food: to provide which, a few charitable persons have, from time to time, left trifling legacies in their wills. Most of our readers will remember, that, until within a very few years past, there was a kind of iron cage in the wall of the Fleet Prison, within which was posted some man of hungry looks, who, from time to time, rattled a money-box, and exclaimed, in a mournful voice, "Pray, remember the poor debtors; pray, remember the poor debtors." The receipts of this box, when there were any, were divided among the poor prisoners: and the men on the poor side relieved each other in this degrading office.

Although this custom has been abolished, and the cage is now boarded up, the miserable and destitute condition of these unhappy persons remains the same. We no longer suffer them to appeal at the prison-gates to the charity and compassion of the passers by; but we still leave unblotted in the leaves of our statute-book, for the reverence and admiration of succeeding ages, the just and wholesome law which declares that the sturdy felon

shall be fed and clothed, and that the penniless debtor shall be left to die of starvation and nakedness. This is no fiction. Not a week passes over our heads, but, in every one of our prisons for debt, some of these men must inevitably expire in the slow agonies of want, if they were not relieved by their fellow-prisoners.

Turning these things in his mind, as he mounted the narrow staircase at the foot of which Roker had left him, Mr. Pickwick gradually worked himself to the boiling-over point; and so excited was he with his reflections on this subject, that he had burst into the room to which he had been directed, before he had any distinct recollection, either of the place in which he was, or of the object of his visit.

The general aspect of the room recalled him to himself at once; but he had no sooner cast his eyes on the figure of a man who was brooding over the dusty fire, than, letting his hat fall on the floor, he stood perfectly fixed, and immovable, with astonishment.

Yes; in tattered garments, and without a coat; his common calico shirt, yellow and in rags; his hair hanging over his face; his features changed with suffering, and pinched with famine; there sat Mr. Alfred Jingle: his head resting on his hand, his eyes fixed upon the fire, and his whole appearance denoting misery and dejection!

Near him, leaning listlessly against the wall, stood a strong-built countryman, flicking, with a worn-out hunting whip, the top-boot that adorned his right foot: his left being (for he dressed by easy stages) thrust into an old slipper. Horses, dogs, and drink had brought him there, pell-mell. There was a rusty spur on the solitary boot, which he occasionally jerked into the empty air: at the

same time giving the boot a smart blow, and muttering some of the sounds by which a sportsman encourages his horse. He was riding, in imagination, some desperate steeple-chase at that moment. Poor wretch! he never rode a match on the swiftest animal in his costly stud, with half the speed at which he had torn along the course that ended in the Fleet.

On the opposite side of the room an old man was seated on a small wooden box, with his eyes riveted on the floor, and his face settled into an expression of the deepest and most hopeless despair. A young girl — his little granddaughter — was hanging about him: endeavoring, with a thousand childish devices, to engage his attention; but the old man neither saw nor heard her. The voice that had been music to him, and the eyes that had been light, fell coldly on his senses. His limbs were shaken with disease, and the palsy had fastened on his mind.

There were two or three other men in the room, congregated in a little knot, and noisily talking among themselves. There was a lean and haggard woman, too — a prisoner's wife — who was watering, with great solicitude, the wretched stump of a dried-up, withered plant, which, it was plain to see, could never send forth a green leaf again; — too true an emblem, perhaps, of the office she had come there to discharge.

Such were the objects which presented themselves to Mr. Pickwick's view, as he looked round him in amazement. The noise of some one stumbling hastily into the room, roused him. Turning his eyes towards the door, they encountered the new comer; and in him, through his rags, and dirt, and misery, he recognized the familiar features of Mr. Job Trotter.

"Mr. Pickwick!" exclaimed Job aloud.

"Eh?" said Jingle, starting from his seat. "Mr. ——! So it is — queer place — strange thing — serves me right — very." And with this, Mr. Jingle thrust his hands into the place where his trousers-pocket used to be, and, dropping his chin upon his breast, sunk back into his chair.

Mr. Pickwick was affected; the two men looked so very miserable. The sharp involuntary glance Jingle had cast at a small piece of raw loin of mutton, which Job had brought in with him, said more of their reduced state than two hours' explanation could have done. He looked mildly at Jingle, and said:

"I should like to speak to you in private. Will you step out for an instant?"

"Certainly," said Jingle, rising hastily. "Can't step far — no danger of over-walking yourself here — Spike park — grounds pretty — romantic, but not extensive — open for public inspection — family always in town — house-keeper desperately careful — very."

"You have forgotten your coat," said Mr. Pickwick, as they walked out to the staircase, and closed the door after them.

"Eh?" said Jingle. "Spout — dear relation — uncle Tom — couldn't help it — must eat, you know. Wants of nature — and all that.

"What do you mean?"

"Gone, my dear sir — last coat — can't help it. Lived on a pair of boots — whole fortnight. Silk umbrella — ivory handle — week — fact — honor — ask Job — knows it."

"Lived for three weeks upon a pair of boots, and a silk umbrella, with an ivory handle!" exclaimed Mr.

Pickwick, who had only heard of such things in shipwrecks, or read of them in Constable's Miscellany.

"True," said Jingle, nodding his head. "Pawnbroker's shop — duplicates here — small sums — mere nothing — all rascals."

"Oh," said Mr. Pickwick, much relieved by this explanation; "I understand you. You have pawned your wardrobe."

"Everything — Job's too — all shirts gone — never mind — saves washing. Nothing soon — lie in bed — starve — die — Inquest — little bone-house — poor prisoner — common necessaries — hush it up — gentlemen of the jury — warden's tradesmen — keep it snug — natural death — coroner's order — workhouse funeral — serve him right — all over — drop the curtain."

Jingle delivered this singular summary of his prospects in life, with his accustomed volubility, and with various twitches of the countenance to counterfeit smiles. Mr. Pickwick easily perceived that his recklessness was assumed, and looking him full, but not unkindly, in the face, saw that his eyes were moist with tears.

"Good fellow," said Jingle, pressing his hand, and turning his head away. "Ungrateful dog — boyish to cry — can't help it — bad fever — weak — ill — hungry. Deserved it all — but suffered much — very." Wholly unable to keep up appearances any longer, and perhaps rendered worse by the effort he had made, the dejected stroller sat down on the stairs, and, covering his face with his hands, sobbed like a child.

"Come, come," said Mr. Pickwick, with considerable emotion, "We'll see what can be done, when I know all about the matter. Here, Job; where is that fellow?"

"Here, sir," replied Job, presenting himself on the stair-

case. We have described him, by the by, as having deeply-sunken eyes, in the best of times. In his present state of want and distress, he looked as if those features had gone out of town altogether.

"Here, sir," cried Job.

"Come here, sir," said Mr. Pickwick, trying to look stern, with four large tears running down his waistcoat. "Take that, sir."

Take what? In the ordinary acceptation of such language, it should have been a blow. As the world runs, it ought to have been a sound, hearty cuff; for Mr. Pickwick had been duped, deceived, and wronged by the destitute outcast who was now wholly in his power. Must we tell the truth? It was something from Mr. Pickwick's waistcoat-pocket, which chinked as it was given into Job's hand: and the giving of which, somehow or other imparted a sparkle to the eye, and a swelling to the heart, of our excellent old friend, as he hurried away.

Sam had returned when Mr. Pickwick reached his own room, and was inspecting the arrangements that had been made for his comfort, with a kind of grim satisfaction which was very pleasant to look upon. Having a decided objection to his master's being there at all, Mr. Weller appeared to consider it a high moral duty not to appear too much pleased with anything that was done, said, suggested, or proposed.

"Well, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Well, sir," replied Mr. Weller.

"Pretty comfortable now, eh, Sam?"

"Pretty vell, sir," responded Sam, looking round him in a disparaging manner.

"Have you seen Mr. Tupman and our other friends?"

"Yes, I *have* seen 'em, sir, and they're a-comin' to-morrow, and wos wery much surprised to hear they warn't to come to-day," replied Sam.

"You have brought the things I wanted?"

Mr. Weller in reply pointed to various packages which he had arranged, as neatly as he could, in a corner of the room.

"Very well, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, after a little hesitation; "listen to what I am going to say, Sam."

"Cert'nly, sir," rejoined Mr. Weller, "fire avay, sir."

"I have felt from the first, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, with much solemnity, "that this is not the place to bring a young man to."

"Nor an old 'un neither, sir," observed Mr. Weller.

"You're quite right, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick; "but old men may come here, through their own heedlessness and unsuspicion: and young men may be brought here by the selfishness of those they serve. It is better for those young men, in every point of view, that they should not remain here. Do you understand me, Sam?"

"Vy no, sir, I do NOT," replied Mr. Weller, doggedly.

"Try, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Vell, sir," rejoined Sam, after a short pause, "I think I see your drift; and if I do see your drift, it's my 'pinion that you're a-comin' it a great deal too strong, as the mail-coachman said to the snow-storm, ven it overtook him."

"I see you comprehend me, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick. "Independently of my wish that you should not be idling about a place like this, for years to come, I feel that for a debtor in the Fleet to be attended by his man-servant

is a monstrous absurdity. — Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, "for a time, you must leave me."

"Oh, for a time, eh, sir?" rejoined Mr. Weller, rather sarcastically.

"Yes, for the time that I remain here," said Mr. Pickwick. "Your wages I shall continue to pay. Any one of my three friends will be happy to take you, were it only out of respect to me. And if I ever do leave this place, Sam," added Mr. Pickwick, with assumed cheerfulness: "if I do, I pledge you my word that you shall return to me instantly."

"Now I'll tell you wot it is, sir," said Mr. Weller, in a grave and solemn voice, "This here sort o' thing won't do at all, so don't let's hear no more about it."

"I am serious, and resolved, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"You air, air you, sir?" inquired Mr. Weller, firmly. "Wery good, sir. Then so am I."

Thus speaking, Mr. Weller fixed his hat on his head with great precision, and abruptly left the room.

"Sam!" cried Mr. Pickwick, calling after him. "Sam! Here!"

But the long gallery ceased to reëcho the sound of footsteps. Sam Weller was gone.

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